

The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society



The France & Colonies Stamp Club was started just after World War II by a dealer, T South Mack, as a commercial vehicle for his business.



It was in May 1949 that the Club was transformed into the France & Colonies Philatelic Society to serve philatelists and dealers.

Volume 59 ● Number 3
September 2009
Whole Number 253

**THE FRANCE & COLONIES
PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN**

Society Website: www.fcps.org.uk

Officers

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The Society

The Society was founded in 1949 and is affiliated to the ABPS. Its affairs are managed by a Committee comprising President, Officers and Committee members, elected annually.

All inquiries about and applications for membership should be addressed to the Membership Secretary, all other correspondence to the General Secretary.

2009-10 Annual Subscription Rates

United Kingdom: £13.00, Europe: £17.00, Elsewhere: £20.00.

Treasurer: C J Hitchen, 36 Everton Road, Croydon CR0 6LA (email: treasurer@fcps.org.uk).

The Society's Girobank account number is 39 784 9001.

The Journal

The Society's Journal is published in March, June, September and December.

It is printed by Direct Offset, 27c High Street, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 9DD from the Editor's camera ready copy.

Distribution: D J Richardson and M S Tyler.

The price is included in members' subscriptions.

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Auction and Exchange Packet Sales

Lots for sale through the Society auctions, held 2 or 3 times a year, should be sent to the appropriate Auction Secretary:

M L Bister, 7 The Slade, Wrestlingworth, Sandy, Beds. SG19 2ES (email: auction1@fcps.org.uk) or

J N Hammonds, 31 Wheatsheaf Close, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 5TH (email: auction2@fcps.org.uk)

according to instructions

Please send material for circulation in booklet form to the appropriate Exchange Packet Secretary, viz.

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Colonies: J C West, 5 Highbanks Road, Hatch End, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 4AR (Telephone 0208 428 4741).

The Library

Members are invited to avail themselves of the services of the Society's substantial library, on terms set out in the Library

List distributed to all Members.

Librarian: G E Barker, 520 Halifax Road, Bradford BD6 2LP.

The Magazine Circuit

The Society subscribes to two French philatelic magazines, and has circuits organised for those who wish to read them.

For further details contact the circuit organiser:

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The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society

Editor: M S Tyler, 56 Mortons Fork, Blue Bridge, Milton Keynes MK13 0LA

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Volume 59 Number 3
September 2009 ● Whole No 253

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SOCIETY NOTES

France & Colonies Philatelic Society of Great Britain – 60th Anniversary

To celebrate the Society's Diamond Jubilee we have not only invited some of our "veteran" members to offer a few reminiscences of the early days of the Society (see pages 84-87 and the photographs on page 93), but have also invited some eminent philatelists, both British and French members of our Society, and including several members or attached members of the *Académie de Philatélie* and the *Académie Européenne de Philatélie*, to present special articles for this edition of the Journal. The French articles have all been translated into English for our members by Peter Kelly and Mick Bister, to whom we are most grateful for their work in this regard.

Editor

Society Journal of the Year Award 2008

The Editor is delighted to announce that the four issues of last year's Journal have won the Specialist Society Class in this competition organised by the Association of British Philatelic Societies, gaining the prize of £100 for our Society. Congratulations to all our contributors!

* * *

New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome the following:

1206 Patrick Watson (IOW), 1350 Ian Potterton (Lincolnshire), 1351 Ian Matthews (Cornwall), 1352 M R Casswell (Lincolnshire), 1353 Mrs Helen Wells (Worcestershire), 1354 James William Randle (Warwickshire).

* * *

Members Deceased

We are saddened to hear of the death of the following members, and offer our sincere condolences to their families:

453 D H R Hughes, 736 L Stenning, 1206 J H Watson.

* * *

Resignations

843 H Israelson, 1150 T D H Rutter, 1323 Dr Arindam Mukherjee.

* * *

Future Events

The **London Group** will meet at the Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Road, London WC1 at 6.30pm on Wednesday 11 October 2009 when Derek Richardson will display Broken Chains, Dulac and Briat, and at 6.30pm on Wednesday 25 November when John Yeomans will display French India; and at 3.00pm on Saturday 7 November 2009 at the Royal Horticultural Halls, Greycoat Street, Westminster, London SW1 when John Scott will display French Decorative Paper.

The **Southern Group** will meet at 2.00pm on Saturday 17 October 2009 at the East Worthing Community Centre, Pages Lane, East Worthing when Robert Bradford will display Cilicia.

The **Northern Group** will meet at 1.30pm at Leeds General Infirmary on Saturday 19 September 2009 when Steve Ellis will display the Red Cross, and on Saturday 14 November 2009 for a Members' Choice meeting.

The **Wessex Group** will meet at 10.00am on Saturday 17 October at the Scout Hall, Lower Street, Harnham, Salisbury, when Andrew Watton will display the Postal History of Corsica.

The **Scottish Group** will meet in Room 1, Cross House, Linlithgow at 1.00pm on Saturday 26 September 2009 for a joint meeting with the Germany & Colonies Scottish Group at which Peter Brand will display a Pictorial Tour of Alsace-Lorraine, and at 2.00pm on Saturday 21 November when Grant Mitchell will display the Colonies and Jim Moffat will show France in the 1950s..

* * *

The Editor

Maurice Tyler is delighted to report that the attempt by a wicked gremlin to depose him from his role of Editor before the publication of this special issue of the Journal has failed. Please change the name of the Hon. Editor on the back page of your latest pink Programme Card to:

"M S Tyler

56 Mortons Fork, Blue Bridge, Milton Keynes MK13 0LA"

I am pleased to add that the Society member responsible for allowing this gremlin access to the card has offered Maurice compensation in the form of a free dinner at the next London meeting that he attends on a Saturday.

* * *

Society Literature Award

The competition for 2008 has been judged as follows:

- 1 - W G Mitchell: "Dahomey Internal Communications at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries"
- 2 - J C West: "Tracing Service Reply Labels"
- 3= - C S Holder "Mauritania and those *Taxe* marks"
- 3= - S R Ellis : "French Transatlantic Mail 1800-1857"

The judges were R E Gosling, C Palmer, A Goude and G H Bowden; and the competition was organised by S R Ellis.

* * *

Exhibition Successes

As reported last month, two of our US members exhibited at the Rocky Mountain Stamp Show in Denver, Colorado, 15-17 May 2009. Their displays (detailed in Journal 252) gained awards as follows:

Ed Grabowski: 2 Gold Medals and a Vermeil Medal, with the (US) FCPS Best Multi-Frame France or Colonies Exhibit by a Member;

Stan Luft: Gold Medal, with Aurora Stamp Club Award and Postal History Society Award.

* * *

Continued on page 125

LIST OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Compiled by Colin Spong and Maurice Tyler

Bulletin de la COL.FRA

N° 128 2^e trim 2009: De Zinder, au Niger, à travers le Dahomey (Baudin); Jean-Xavier Goetz, un philatéliste au Cameroun (Cobb); l'étiquette ne fait pas le Colis encore moins postal (Flotte); Les Postes Rurales en Indochine (Gruet); Compléments aux Hors-Série et Textes Parus: Taxe des Colonies Générales (Coré); Rig-Rag [Tchad] (Rojon); La surcharge SÉNÉGAL sur timbres des colonies générales (Drye); Les surcharges du Dahomey (Bessaud).

Cameo: Journal of the West Africa Study Circle

Vol 11 N° 2 Whole N° 77 June 2009: FAM 22 Blockage at Brazzaville (Wilson); Kano Field Force and the Siege of Agadez (Kelly); Togo – an underpaid postcard, 1924 (Mayne & May); Cameroun 1961 surcharge 2/6d type 1 & 6d (Bratzel *et al.*).

L'Écho de la Timbrologie

Permanent features: Actualités, Nouveautés, Prêt-à-poster Florilège de PÂP, Variétés, Surcharges, Actualités, Cartes postales, Comment ça marche?, Flammes, Livres, Maximaphilie, Thématique.

N° 1829 May 2009: Étienne Théry, Dis, l'artiste, dessine-moi le timbre de tes rêves (-); Le non-émis Kastler (Sinai); Le centenaire du premier timbre-poste français (Hella); Duxin: Des collectionneurs extraordinaires [20] (Storch); L'oblitératrice Neopost (Charbonnier).

N° 1830 June 2009: Benoît Germe, Dis, l'artiste, dessine-moi le timbre de tes rêves (-); Une muse sociétale, vitrine du patrimoine de La Poste (Albaret); Le Pont-Neuf emballé par Christo et Jeanne (Krempper); Les postiers sur les bancs de l'école [1] (Marion); Duxin: Des collectionneurs extraordinaires [21] (Storch); Le «5F Daurat Vanier»: un usage mouvementé [2] (Grillot); Musées postaux et philatéliques du monde (Emmenegger).

N° 1831 Jul-Aug 2009: Antonia Neyrins, Dis, l'artiste, dessine-moi le timbre de tes rêves (-) L'aviateur Louis Blériot traversait la Manche (Hella); Duxin: Des collectionneurs extraordinaires [22] (Storch); Les postiers sur les bancs de l'école [2] (Marion); Le «5F Daurat Vanier»: un usage mouvementé [3] (Grillot); Avant carte postale illustrée entiers et précurseurs (Emmenegger); Artisanat d'art laotien (Geay).

France & Colonies Philatelist

Whole N° 297 (Vol 65 N° 3): The French Occupation of Fezzan (McGarrity); British Caribbean Mail: The French Connection (Freeland & Herendeen); French Philately on the World Wide Web (Seeke); The Postage Due Stamps of Zanzibar (Herendeen).

Timbres Magazine

Permanent features: Actualités, courrier des lecteurs, Club des clubs, Manifestations, marcophilie, Les nouveautés de France, Actus Andorre, Monaco et les TOM, Pâp, Expertise, Les variétés, Le Journal des nouveautés, Bibliothèque, Mon marché du mois.

N° 102 Jun 2009: Escale à Saint-Pierre (Pellinec); De nouvelles valeurs surchargées au Bénin (Coudreau);

Paquets-cadeaux (Dupré); Mention manuscrite «boîte mobile» (de la Mettrie); La grande poste d'Alger (Chauvin); La «Belle Époque» de l'aviation (Apaire et Sinai); La plus grande escroquerie de la Belle époque (Zeyons); Marques postales inconnues (Baudot); Une lettre taxée pour Pondichéry (Prugnon); Quand la philatélie s'enflamme (Amiel); Hôtel Continental, Paris, février 1940 (Chauvin).

N° 103 Jul-Aug 2009: 1939-1940: La France à New York (Chauvin); A la poursuite du carré noir [9^e tirage du TVP de la Marianne de Briat] (Rucklin); Quand les types *Groupe* servaient en Chine (Grabowski); Algérie 1943: des surcharges manuscrites peu banales (Philomax); Un port payé... en cursive (de la Mettrie); 1885 les premiers timbres de SPM (Tillard); Grandes raretés sud-africaines à Madagascar (Groenewald); La gloire de Blériot (Zeyons); Au sommet de la collection des marques monégasques (Baudot); Une Marianne qui phosphore toujours plus (Keledjian); La griffe «Affranchissement insuffisant» (Prugnon); 1943: Souvenir de Nouméa (Chauvin).

The Collectors Club Philatelist

Vol 88 N° 3 May-Jun 2009: Use of Madagascar's First Stamps, the Typeset Issue of 1891 (Grabowski).

The Indo-China Philatelist

Vol 39 No 3 (Whole No 188) May 2009: Low Value Native Women Officials (Bentley); Coat of Arms Variety (Bentley); In Search of Information [about early Vietnamese & Laos postage stamps overprinted SPECIMEN] (Taylor Smith, Aspnes); Rural Postmarks from Laos (Dykhouse); Indochina's Airmail Markings (Bentley); 1922 National Colonial Exhibition, Marseilles, France (Cartafalsa).

Documents Philatéliques

N° 201 3^e trim 2009: Surtaxe aérienne réduite et cartes de Nouvel An Air France éditées en métropole (1936-1940) (Sinai & Abensur); Le bureau du palais de Saint-Cloud en 1852, Présidence de Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte (Langlais); 1915-1919 La guerre dans le grand sud tunisien (au royaume du Cafard) (Fabrègue); Djibouti - les grands timbres à images de 1894 (*suite*) (Guichenduc).

Les Feuilles Marcophiles

N° 337 2^e trim 2009 (Jun): «Courriers de l'air» français et allemands dans la «drôle de guerre» (Albaret); La poste pendant la guerre 1939-1945 - Consignes «Défense nationale» DNB (Sené); Les oblitérations de fortune de l'été et l'automne 1940 utilisées dans l'Aube (Chevalier); Les recommandations des télégrammes (Narjoux); Valeurs déclarées - Tarif du 1^{er} juin 1870 au 31 août 1871 (Lavigne); Le secteur postal 91134 du détachement français «Air» de Tel-Aviv [Nov-Déc 1956] (Sinai); C'est gratuit, mais un jour seulement (Douron); Utilisation actuelle des découpes d'entiers postaux (Bonneyfo); Les nouveautés en matière de guichets-annexes (Delvaux); Les risques du métier (Flotte); AHPMR - un P.P. antérieur à la circulaire qui l'instaure (Pinhas).

REMINISCENCES OF THE EARLY DAYS

On this occasion of the 60th Anniversary of our Society a number of longstanding members have offered their memories and impressions of the early days of its existence, and we publish here a selection of these for members' interest.

George Barker:

I have good memories of the arrangements for the organisation of the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain for 1974 which was in the hands of France & Colonies Philatelic Society as host society. This was as a result of suggestions and offers made to the powers that be by John Levett our vigorous past-president. He obtained the position of Congress Secretary and I acted as his assistant. Stephen Holder was in charge of publications and publicity and doubtless much more and a first 'recce' was arranged in 1972.

We all travelled to Paris (John, Stephen, his wife Judith and the writer) in John's Peugeot 404, the performance of which on the French motorway was ably demonstrated by John! He had liaised with the late Pierre Langlois RDP who had a pharmacy in the Cours de Vincennes in eastern Paris and we inspected a few suitable locations. I am not sure how we came to settle on the Grand Hôtel at Enghien-les-Bains on the northwest outskirts of Paris but I believe John had earlier knowledge of the place. In any event, it proved ideal. There was also a contact with a British resident who worked in Paris for British Rail but I recall that this proved to be a disappointment. In the course of our visit we also went to the Postal Museum in its original location (4 rue Saint Romain, Paris V^e) in the Hôtel de Choiseul-Praslin where I joined SAMP (*Société des Amis du Musée Postal*) and bought as much of the available literature as possible! A parting gift to me from Pierre Langlois was an enormous box of postcards all franked with 5c Type Blanc. We found plenty of the scarce Type I *bis* (ex-booklets)!

Congress, when it finally occurred in 1974, was a fascinating and rewarding experience, but for once I was not sorry to leave France. We had an unexpected job of finding accommodation at the last minute for numerous visitors to Congress (our British Rail contact fell down on the job!) and my capacious Ford Zephyr acted as taxi to many of our participants, as they arrived at the Gare du Nord. The late John Hayhurst, our President, acted as Chairman of Congress. I shall long remember cancelling hundreds of envelopes (franked with a variety of unusual definitives) specially produced for Congress by Stephen Holder, helping the official French postmen whose task it was! Finally, perhaps I can recall the fireworks display over the lake at Enghien – a memorable scene – and the RDP ceremony at which Patrick Pearson (now a doyen of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists), the late Dr J Fromageat, the late Raymond Salles and the late George South all signed.

Ah, *tempus fugit*!

* * *

Mick Bister:

When I joined the Society way back in 1967, I was living in Kent. It was therefore a straightforward and relatively

quick journey from Staplehurst to Charing Cross and then a short walk to the Shaftesbury Hotel for our evening meetings.

It was always a pleasure to come up to London and whenever I could I would make a day out of it going round the dealers before attending the Society's meeting. In those days there was the Strand Stamp Centre facing Stanley Gibbons and there I would peruse the stock and occasionally find a bargain. I must admit, I cannot recall the names of the dealers who rented the units in the Centre but there was one other London dealer, and fellow member of the Society, whom I shall never forget – a certain A Constantine, or Connie as he used to be known.

Connie had his offices on the first floor of the Grand Building in Trafalgar Square and for a novice like me a visit to his premises was like entering Aladdin's cave. He was not the most organised dealer and often a request to view a specific item was met with a Gallic shrug which I translated to mean that he had the item in stock but he hadn't a clue where. Mind you, it was not surprising that material could not be easily located. Both the dealer's and customer's vision must have been impaired by the thick pall of tobacco smoke which invariably filled his office. I soon learned that it was advisable to give advance notice of one's requirements so that upon arrival there would be a better chance of making a purchase. On one occasion I had informed Connie that I wanted to develop my collection of *Type Blanc* dated corner blocks and would be pleased to have a look at his stock. When I arrived he was waiting, pipe in mouth, with his stock book of dated corner blocks at the ready. While I went through his stock, extracting carefully with my tweezers the items I wanted, Connie's attention to my purchases gradually waned as he became progressively more concerned about his underperforming pipe. As he muttered to himself he took out his own tweezers and proceeded to empty his pipe and scrape out the bowl. Bits of ash and tobacco flew out and bounced around the counter as I shielded the pile of corner blocks I had just extracted. Once he had reignited his pipe, Connie was more relaxed and returned his attention to me. He counted the blocks, totted up what I owed him, and using the very same tweezers with which he had just cleaned out his pipe, transferred my purchases to an envelope. Fortunately no permanent damage was done, but for several days I was the owner of somewhat aromatic stamps.

Meetings at the Shaftesbury Hotel were very convivial and I soon found that the more senior members were more than willing to give advice and share their interests with a novice like me. Looking back at the reports of the meetings I see that at those 1960s meetings I was joined by Bill Mitchell, Alan Barrett, George Barker and later Stephen Holder all of whom are still very much involved with the Society over forty years later.

Chris Easton:

I can remember no definite date when I joined the Society: I think it was in the early '60s. I became Secretary from 1966/69 and also ran, I think, the early auctions. I well remember President Ernest Bishop, a wonderful man always ready to help. I worked with John Levett and the Exchange Secretary Capt Davis! Looking at the list of early members I well remember Messrs Barrett, Barker, Gurr and Mitchell. Though I sold my collection some years ago I am still very interested in the Society, my interest now being more inclined to postcards, in which I still trade as Chris Easton Cards, visiting the Bloomsbury Fair every month.

One of the major changes has been the Bulletin which began as an about four page roneoed leaflet, and now we have a truly professional production in the Journal.

Long may the Society prosper and good luck with the Diamond Jubilee

* * *

Ray Hill

I've wracked my brains to establish the most memorable experience that I have had with the 'France and Colonies'; there have been so many happy moments over the past years.

As John Levett remarked in a friendly way during one of my visits to the auction 'the Plymouth member has come all this way from the backwoods'. I would certainly have liked to make more frequent visits. John influenced my collecting of France in a lasting way.

One display I was lucky enough to attend was the display of 'Classical France Part I' of that famous member Gaston Berlemont in 1977. The way he displayed the famous blue shades of Yvert 14a and b in the form of a huge cross has always stuck in my memory and of course I copied it!

The other memorable experience was the visit of the Philatelic Congress of GB to Plymouth in June 1976 when I had the pleasure of a visit from some members of the Society to my home to view my collection; these included John Levett, George Barker and Stephen Holder. I hope I have not forgotten anybody! But the amusing thing was that my good wife arrived, with the collection and the members spread over the floor. She later said that if she had done a strip-tease nobody would have been distracted!

* * *

Harold Hilton:

I first became aware of the Society during my membership of the Wolverhampton Philatelic Society (which sadly closed down some years ago) when a fellow member Dr Bill Cunningham awakened my interests in French stamps – he being a keen collector of that country and also a member of this Society. Unfortunately I lost contact with him when he retired from medical practice and retired to Scotland. As he does not appear in the list of veteran members I assume that he is no longer a member – although as he was much

older than myself perhaps this is not surprising.

I have to confess that my collecting is, and has been for many years, passive as I still work full time within my profession and flatter myself with the promise that when I eventually retire I shall be able to spend unlimited hours in sorting and mounting what is now a considerable accumulation of philatelic material.

When I first started to collect French stamps I took new issues from a Paris dealer who I recall was named Tommy Anka, who for many years provided a very efficient service – but that service ceased when he retired and I then received new issues from a firm on the South Coast (whose name I can no longer recall) until that firm merged with another firm and the service became sporadic and eventually ceased to exist. When this happened I decided that I would, apart from certain interest, cease to take new issues and try to fill gaps in my collection from the exchange packet or from the occasional Stamp Fair.

This recollection brings to mind an elderly knowledgeable member of the Wolverhampton Philatelic Society who specialised in stamps of Great Britain, save that his cut off collection point was 1936 as he took the view (and who is to say that he has not been proved right) that after the death of King George V most modern issues tended to resemble cheese labels.

Knowing how keen and knowledgeable the members are on all aspects of French philately you will probably be appalled to learn that French stamps are not my first love. Although material is now scarce and when available usually expensive, my main interest is in Newfoundland, British Columbia, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, these countries having the advantage of a finite range of stamps and material and one does not have to bother about new issues!

I doubt that these random recollections will be of interest to the majority of the Society's members but I shall continue my membership and continue to receive and enjoy the exchange packet.

* * *

John Mayne:

In the mid-1960s I traced the Society but had no personal contact until the 1970s when it held its weekend at Warwick. John Levett was President. I attended Saturday and met John Phipps from Leicester. We both contributed to the exchange packet and as new boys sat in the corner to compare notes. Sad to say the experience was not the most enjoyable and I left discouraged. Years later I suggested that members wear name tabs at this event and I am sure this helps newcomers feel at home and find their feet more quickly.

About ten years later when my collection had grown and I thought worthy of sharing, I attended a weekend at the Regent Hotel, Leamington Spa, and had the effrontery to offer to display. In my defence the area where I spent most of my working life is a philatelic wilderness, the nearest

society to the west being eighty miles away on the Welsh coast and my philatelic experience at that time being very limited – some will say it still is!

Arriving late for dinner, I took the remaining seat next to a charming lady, one of the few present, and assumed her husband was a philatelist, not her! Upon enquiry where his interest lay I was told 'Books'. I wondered if I was at the right event! The lady was Yvonne Newbury. When over dinner she asked my views on capital gains tax having just sold the only known *Ballon Monté* to Hong Kong I was concerned my display would prove to be what it was, meagre!

Saturday morning commenced with a display by Ted Coles on the Siege of Paris and I recall Yvonne examining a cover which had a family connection, as Ted suspected, whereupon he simply told her to have it for her collection. This was philatelic friendship of the highest order.

After coffee I rose to my feet with trepidation to display cancels on a range of French Colony tablet issues. This was my first stamp display, I had never seen material such as I had just witnessed and had no knowledge of postal history, so I was considerably embarrassed I had offered to display. Light-heartedly, I explained that the previous night when reviewing my offering I did so in the bath, and regretfully the covers fell into the water. I managed to salvage the stamps and hoped my fellow members would not look too unkindly upon the display. A person in the front row, David Jennings-Bramly, rose to his feet with excitement at a postmark from New Caledonia and I was encouraged to continue. Later he kindly sent a selection of early issues of the area in appreciation of my modest display. That was a turning point.

The weekend opened my eyes to postal history. Others to offer encouragement were Stan Bidmead, Bernard Lucas and John Whiteside – or was I persuaded down that route by the whiskey consumed late into Saturday morning in their convivial company? If I recall correctly, also present were Peter Kelly and Mavis Pavey attending their first event, but thirty years on memory is not always what it should be.

* * *

Bill Mitchell:

I joined way back in 1957 (the annual sub was 7/6d or 37½p), but meeting times did not fit in with my daily home-ward arrangements until some time in 1960, so my earliest memories really date from then. In those days we met in the dreary surroundings of a room in the Kingsway Hall; there were no frames and members attending the meetings had to inspect displays laid out on a table. The elders who ran the show were rather formal by today's standards, but were friendly and helpful to a novice (as, of course, they always have been). Their displays were of a very high quality and covered a surprisingly wide field. I particularly remember the then President, Ernest Bishop, who delighted me by showing the French Colonies from time to time (the Colonies were not then anything like as popular as they are today), and Frank Davis, who concentrated on French definitives, most notably the Sowers.

Because of his advanced age – he died in 1977 aged 92 – and the arthritis which so often goes with it, Frank was eventually unable to get to meetings, and I used to visit him from time to time, when I enjoyed going through his albums in rather more attractive surroundings than the Kingsway Hall. Tea, including in season strawberries which he cultivated himself despite his mobility problem, was served by Mrs Moore, his housekeeper. Mrs Moore was, shall I say, a 'character'. Frank had two non-philatelic distinctions which were decidedly out of the ordinary. He had represented Great Britain, as one of the fencing team, in the 1912 Olympics, and he must have been one of the few surviving early recipients of the OBE, which he was awarded in 1918 (the Order had only been founded in the previous year).

What of younger members? I recall discussing mutual non-philatelic interests (we were both Civil Servants) with a Miss Huth, not yet Yvonne Newbury, and home-bound inquests on meetings with George Nash, then of Uxbridge and now a stalwart of the Southern Group at Worthing, but my most vivid recollection concerns young Mr Levett. On one occasion our rather staid proceedings were unexpectedly enlivened when, somewhat late, John burst into the room at the head of a column consisting of his wife and an exuberant procession of their sons in descending order of height (there were probably only three, or at the most four, of them but there seemed to be more!). One of these small boys was to follow in John's footsteps and is now, as he was, a Fellow of the Royal.

In the late '50s and early '60s the Journal, then called the Newsletter, bore little resemblance to the sophisticated publication you are reading. This is no reflection on the quality of the articles printed in it, it merely recognises the great strides that have been made in the technique of magazine printing over the last 50 years or so. The Editor, the Rev Wilfred Bentley, who was tragically killed in a motor-ing accident in 1965 shortly after becoming President in succession to Ernest Bishop, frequently wrote or translated most of the articles himself. The magazine was duplicated – this must mean, I think, that he first typed the whole thing to get the layout right and then retyped it on wax stencils so that it could be printed. Illustrations of postmarks and other cachets, and varieties, were apparently hand-drawn by means of a stylus of some kind – photographs of stamps on covers first appeared with the issue of January 1959. The six issues a year must have been the fruit of many, many hours' work, and a complete run of the numbers edited by him stand as a fully-deserved memorial.

One final recollection. For some years the Society arranged an annual dinner, but since it was held in London this ancestor of our Annual Weekends was of little benefit to most of our members. As to cost – in 1955 the dinner, held at Bertorelli's Restaurant in Charlotte Street, cost 15/- (75p). How do I remember all these prices? By having a good run of old Journals.

Happy Days!!

* * *

Heloise Mitchell:

It was in the mid-1960s and thanks to F E Dixon, meteorologist and well known postal historian, that I joined the France and Colonies as member number 106. When I joined the Irish Philatelic Society in 1964, he was president and, knowing of my interest in collecting France, he suggested that I also become a member of a specialist society such as the France and Colonies.

Living in Ireland, my attendance at events and meetings has been very infrequent, but in the '70s and '80s I did manage to get to a few of the philatelic weekends which I enjoyed enormously. The range of displays compressed into two days was amazing, and the help and information so willingly given to a relative beginner was very much appreciated.

I remember one particular weekend in Leamington Spa because the weather was very inclement. The drive down from Holyhead was challenging and, having arrived later than planned because of the snow, we parked the car - a Fiat - outside for the night. When my husband, George, tried to start it the next morning, he had difficulty and while struggling to get it going, a group of men on the other side of the road, not realising we were Irish, shouted out, "that's what you get for buying a foreign car."

Fond memories of the friendliness and "*accueil*" shown to me by some of the members come to mind:

Stan and Mavis Bidmead received me into their home in Reigate for a few days in the late 1970s. After a tiring trip, I was feasted on a succulent leg of lamb with all the trimmings, and I can still picture Stan carving it as I write this. But the best was yet to come - the *entry marks* for dessert!

Ron and Gladys Belton welcomed me to Bournemouth in the early 1980s, and Ron gave me a few very nice items for my collection which I treasure to this day. He showed me album after album of stamps and postal history and explained in detail his system for preparing booklets for the packets.

Jack Brook and his wife invited me to stay with them in St Anne's-on-Sea where I had a very enjoyable few days swapping items of interest to both of us. I corresponded with him for very many years after that, right up to the time he died.

On another occasion I spent a night with Stephen and Judith

Holder in London, and Stephen then brought me to one of the weekend sessions. Indeed, in the 1970s, Stephen came over to Dublin to display his Franco-Prussian War collection, though not without hassle from the Irish customs! He took time out during this visit to identify some of my postal markings and advise me on writing up my collection.

Over the years I have corresponded with other Society members, among whom David Jennings-Bramley and Ian McQueen, who gave me many covers and answered queries on rates and various other puzzles.

I seem to remember a very nice France & Colonies reunion at Philexfrance. I recall, to my embarrassment, meeting George Barker at the exhibition and not recognising him because of the radical change in hair style since our previous encounter at one of the weekends.

In 1981, when on a short visit to Cannes, I contacted Ralph Side, correspondent for the Society from the Riviera as he was living in Nice at the time. We had a great rendezvous in a brasserie in Nice and exchanged much philatelic information and gossip. He gave me an insight into how philately in France operated and how French philatelic societies were run.

When the Irish Philatelic Society celebrated its centenary in 2001, it had the privilege of seeing exceptional displays from France & Colonies members Robert Johnson and Barrie Jay. These took place in Ely House in Dublin, where the television series *The Ambassador*, starring Pauline Collins, was filmed, and where there is a room named after the distinguished Irish philatelist, Dr Stafford Johnson.

Over the years the Society has provided me with many facilities, the most significant being the Journal, which I always thought was very informative and of a very high standard. A lot of my French philatelic literature has come through the Society, and of course some of my material was provided by the auctions, through which I got some very interesting items, though not without a bit of competition!

I can therefore say that, even though I reside outside the UK and can not participate in a lot of the Society's activities, membership has been very worthwhile, and I would therefore recommend it to anybody with an interest in the philately of France and/or its colonies.

* * *

SHORTER ITEMS - INCLUDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Airmails of the French Congo

A special thanks to John Hammonds for one very fine article, "Airmails of the French Congo", in Journal 252 of June 2009. It is wonderfully informative and covers the ground well. It seems to me, although I am no expert in the matter, that he has all the information needed by collectors trying to understand the airmail services touching French Congo, from the beginning of such services until the end of the war and beyond.

May I be permitted to add a little information about the postage rates given on page 66? John has probably relied on Derek Richardson or Alexandre *et al* — as one would expect. But a few additions can now be made as a result of the research of the group devoted to airmail rates used in French colonies.

(1) In the list of French domestic basic postal rates, one change between 1939 and 1945 should be added: namely, a 1F50/20g rate agreed to in December 1943 and published in the AEF official journal for 1 January 1944 (effective date not given).

(2) In the list of foreign ("overseas") rates, the change from 2F50 to 4F (which did take place in France in 1942, as indicated) was likewise agreed to and published the same as the preceding item (thus probably effective at the end of 1943).

(3) In the list of airmail surcharges to France, the 4F50/5g surcharge dated 2 May 1941 (which appears in both Alexandre and Richardson) was, it would seem, a fictitious (?) rate for the service from France to AEF (not vice-versa): there was no viable service between Free French AEF and Vichy France at this time, and this surcharge does not appear in the AEF official journal; nor does cover evidence from AEF in our group's database support it.

(4) The 1F25/20g rate dated 31 January 1928, which carried airmail only between Léopoldville and Boma (not from Boma to France; John has made this clear), changed to 80c/5g as of 1 May 1934. By this same action, some additional airmail surcharges were provided, between

Léopoldville or Buta, in Belgian Congo, and France (via Sabena and Imperial), made available to patrons in AEF and published in the AEF official journal (2F50/5g from Léo, 1F75/5g from Buta), but these no doubt go beyond the scope of John's intentions for the article.

I may observe, finally, that effective dates are always somewhat troublesome; regardless, the dates for changes in France were not necessarily the dates for changes in French Congo or in any other French colonies.

Here is my analysis of the franking on the covers John used (pre-1946):

p. 60: 19 Oct 1934, Brazzaville to Algiers @ 50c = 50c basic, carried free of airmail surtax (as is often the case on such special flights).

p. 61 (top): 12 Nov 1935, Brazzaville to Tamatave, Madagascar @ 50c = same as preceding.

p. 61 (bottom): 8 Nov 1938, Brazzaville to Paris @ 3F65 = 65c basic + 3F/5g airmail to France.

p. 63 (top): 15 May 1937, Casablanca to Pointe Noire @ 2F50 = 50c basic + 50c/10g airmail to Algiers + 1F50 airmail Algiers to AEF.

p. 63 (bottom): 9(?) Sep 1939, Brazzaville to Blaye (France) @ 3F90 = 90c basic + 3F/5g airmail to France.

p. 64: 29 Oct 1941, Beirut to Brazzaville @ 25p = 5p basic + 20p airmail to AEF.

p. 65: 25 Nov 1943, Dakar to Pointe Noire @ 9F50 = 1F50 basic + 8F/5g airmail to AEF.

This last, by the way, illustrates the 1F50 domestic basic postal rate that I referred to in my additions to John's data (Note 1 above).

The cover on p. 66 is beyond the period of our study. Even so, using Derek's tables, the analysis is: 18 Jul 1946, Paris to Brazzaville @ 13F postage (+ 2F charity) = 3F basic + 10F/5g airmail.

Bob Picirilli

Identification of Classic Stamps



Yvert 32 missing 5 and F



Yvert 41A or 41B



Yvert 130

I have recently joined the Society and am most impressed re the quality and standard of the Journal and also the helpfulness of the members, as well as the auction and exchange packets – all very important when you reside in far away Ross & Cromarty. I have three questions which I would be grateful if any member or reader could enlighten me on with a positive response!

1. 1869 5 franc Yvert 32: missing 5 and F

Until recently the 'notes' in Yvert mentioned 'used' and two processes re the printing; now a 'block' is described where one or possibly more stamps have partial missing characters. I have a stamp in good condition where the 5 is missing and the F barely visible; the date stamp is clear showing PARIS MARS 1877. Perhaps the 'missing' characters are due to worn plates as the known copies are all late usage – or are they? I have obtained a certificate for the stamp: "Genuine ... normal"?

2. 1870 4 centimes Bordeaux Yvert 41A

For a considerable period I have been searching the auc-

tions etc for a reasonable copy of Yvert 41B; the more numerous of the two types. About two months ago I succeeded in purchasing what I thought was Yvert 41B but on examining the stamp I noticed a small signature on the reverse and after some research discovered the signature was R Calves. I then realised the stamp was 41A. My question is whether I assume the stamp was positively expertised as the scarce one – or do I submit to another expert ?

3. c1915 15 centimes Sower Yvert 130 Type III or V

Over a period of 30 years I have tried to discover the reason for or the origin of a particular copy of this usually common stamp. This stamp 'appears to be unmounted mint' and has an overprint in black diagonally across the stamp from the top left corner to under the '5' of 15c. There appear in black – but best described as 'grey' – the clearly legible lettersCOMPARABLE with possibly one or more letters before the C?

Any information about these items from members of the Society will be welcome.

Ken Dixon

Defaced Stamps



The piece illustrated on the cover of Journal 252 of June 2009 was seen by me with some amusement. I enclose a portion of the envelope in which it was received. I wonder how many other members had similarly defaced stamps!

Mike Roberts



And this was recently received by me from the United States.

Maurice Tyler

Bastille Day Meeting 2009



Host Stephen Holder and his audience



George Barker, Chris Hitchen and Peter Maybury



John Moreton, Peter Rooke
and (kneeling) Peter Maybury



Lunch being served:
Ross MacNeil, Marian Bister and Peter Rooke



Lunch in the garden:
Round the table in the foreground can be identified
Ross MacNeil, Ronnie Shiers, Tony Shepherd and Peter Rooke,
with the partly hidden figures of Steve Ellis and Chris Hitchen

The report on this meeting can be found on page 140.

Photographs by Peter Maybury and Mick Bister

WWII Cover from Vichy France to Greenland



Though not a member of your Society, I met your Secretary, Peter Kelly, at Midpex and showed him this cover which he explained was not really in his area of expertise, though he realised the destination is obviously very scarce. He suggested putting it in the Journal as a query.

I attach scans of both sides of the cover, which went from Vichy France to Greenland. Any information about mail leaving Vichy France to countries on the Allied side would

be welcome, as well as an assesment of the rarity of the cover I own. Many years ago at a show in Paris, I remember being told that even some things (various handstamps) on mail addressed to the occupied part of France were scarce.

I normally live in Canada (Montreal) but spend the summer in London (this year until 18 August). My email address is: wjonss@hotmail.com

Wilbur Jonsson

SÉNÉGAL Diagonal Overprint of 1884



In the “List of Recently Published Articles” on page 3 of Journal 251 (March 2009) you included the titles of articles published on this diagonal overprint in the *Bulletin de la*

COL.FRA. I attach a cover sent from Kaolack, Senegal, to St Louis in 1885 illustrating three different stamps overprinted in this way.

Bruno Mattei

1924 Paris Olympics Labels

I just wish to offer a little comment about the Paris 1924 Olympics labels John Mayne showed in Journal 252 of June 2009 (page 67).

I have six individual labels and a pair of the two types setenant, all with black centres but with four distinct coloured borders in yellow green, olive green, dark metallic green

and light brown – of which the latter seems to be a different shade from that shown in John’s note.

In addition, I have a cutting from “*Linn’s Weekly Stamp News*” dating from 1964 which mentions a block of four in black and light orange, highlighted because of the 1964 summer Olympics in Tokyo.

Godfrey Bowden

New Philatelic Website

I have recently been informed by SPAL (*Société des Spécialistes en Marques Postales et Oblitérations d’Alsace-Lorraine*) that they have set up a new website. This seems to be quite

well done, and I thought the news might be of interest of several members of our Society. It can be found at the following URL: <www.spal-alsace-lorraine.fr>.

Roy Reader

Continued on page iii (inside back cover)

23 Years Ago

These members and former members of the Society were photographed at a competition evening in 1986. They were unearthed recently in a Society archive by our President, Mick Bister, although the photographer is unknown.



Derek Richardson



Barbara Priddy



Chris Hitchen and Colin Spong



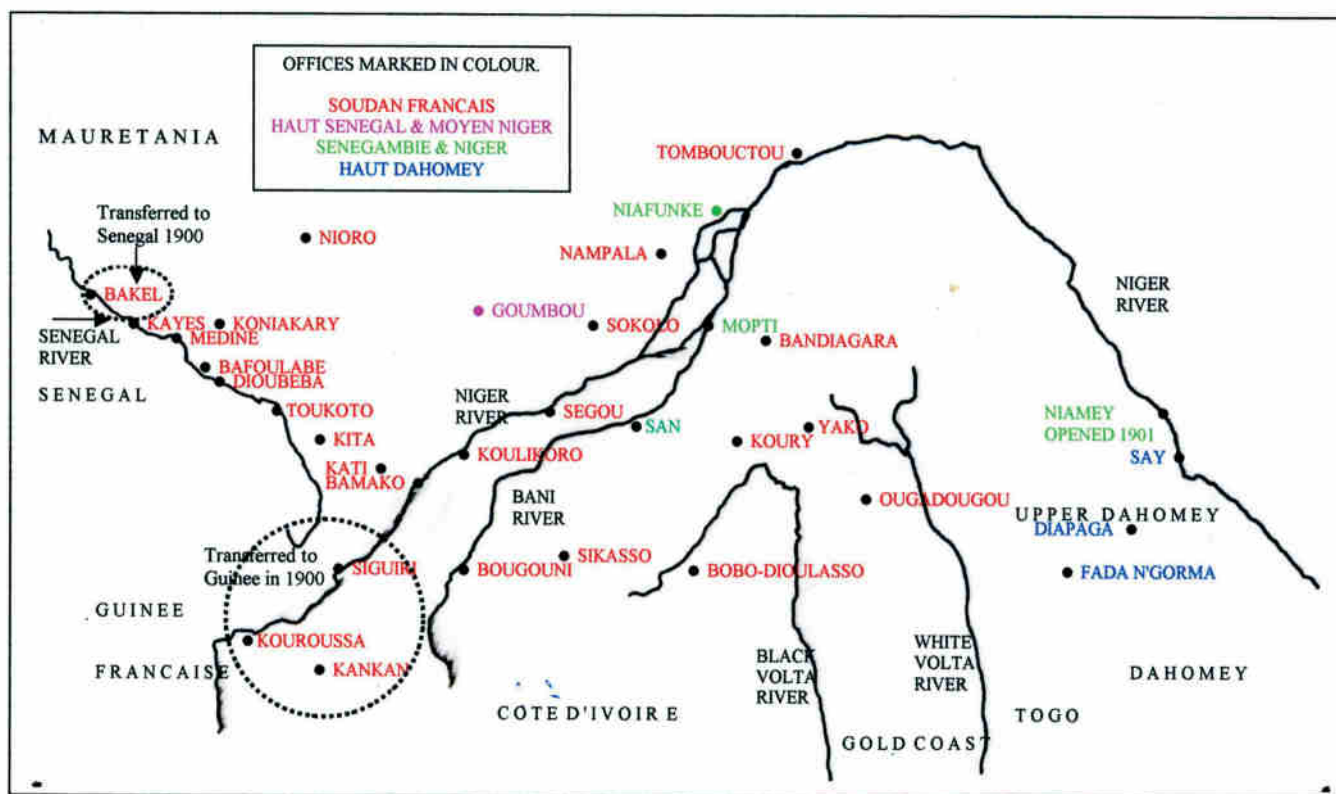
Ted Coles



George Barker, Alec Swain and Bernard Berkinshaw-Smith

The Development of the Services of the *Postes et Télégraphes* in *Sénégalie-Niger* 1900-1903

Peter Kelly



Soudan Français

Offices Open during the Period of Military Expansion 1900-1901

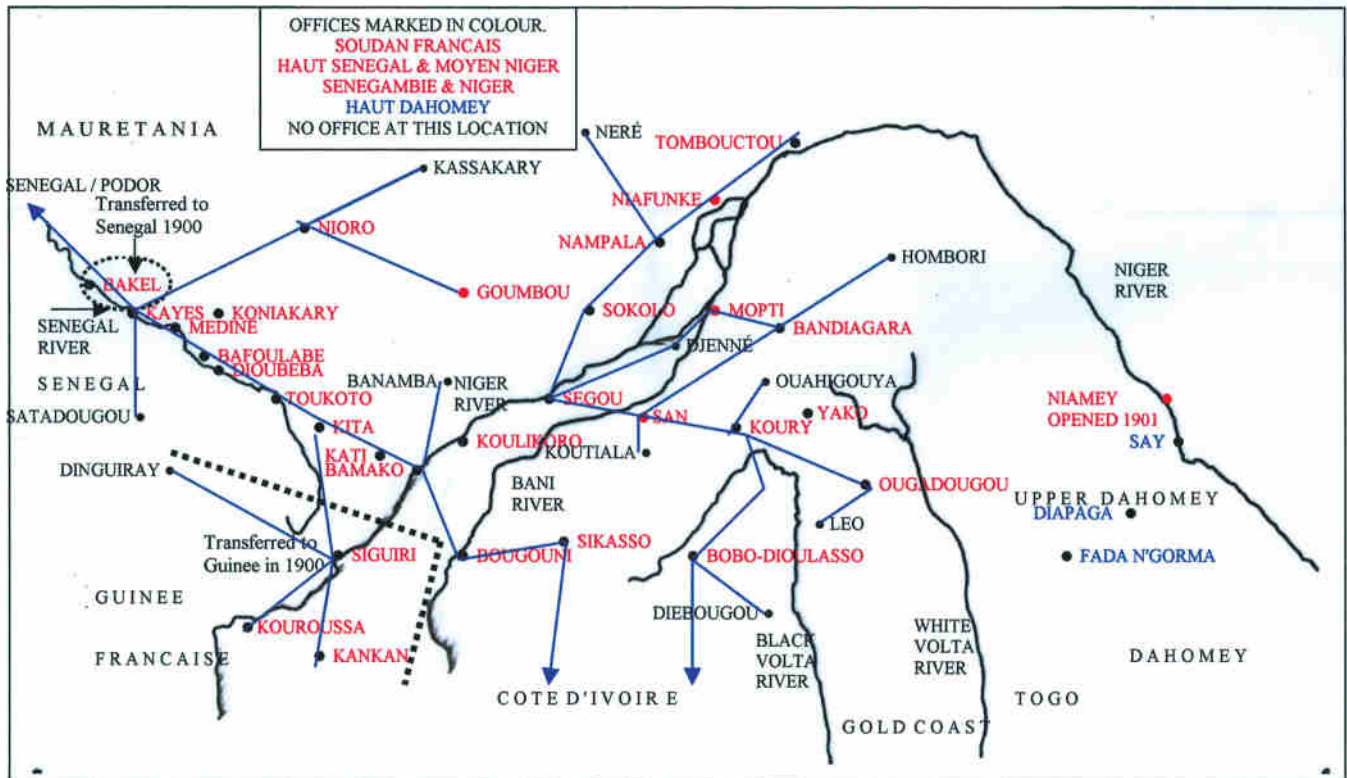
I was fortunate, recently, to be given copies of a series of reports and documents made by Monsieur Poisson, *Commissaire Principal* and, later, *Sous-Inspecteur des Postes* based in Kayes and addressed to the Permanent Delegate of the Governor General in the territories of *Sénégalie-Niger* covering the years 1900 to 1903. These reports, which cover all aspects of the postal services, bring to life the difficulties encountered in setting up a postal and telegraph service in a newly colonised region, distant from the sphere of control in Dakar (Senegal) and accessed with difficulty.

It may be useful, as an introduction, to outline the political and geographical make-up of what was later to be called *Soudan Français*. In 1893, *Soudan Français* became a colony and was controlled by a civilian Governor, but in 1899 it reverted to military control but lost autonomous control of financial and administrative matters. The old *Soudan Français* was dismembered with parts going to French Guinea, Ivory Coast and Senegal and the creation of two military regions based on Bobo-Dioulasso and Tombouctou. The civilian part that was left took the name of *Haut Sénégal et Moyen Niger* and was administered at Kayes by a Delegate of the Governor of the Federation of French West Africa. In 1900 a third military territory was established on the left bank of the Niger below Say in territory that was to become the colony of Niger. In 1902 a part of Senegal (protectorate) together with the non-military part

of *Haut Sénégal et Moyen Niger* became *Sénégalie et Niger*. This only lasted until the end of 1904 when the civilian and first two military zones were amalgamated into the colony of *Haut Sénégal & Niger*.

By 1900 the political situation was becoming more stable with colonisation slowly under way and military posts established throughout the territory.

The Territory was initially an extension of the coastal colony of Senegal bounded to the north by the Sahara and Algeria and to the East by the Niger river, with the third military territory extending to the east of that into what became the colony of Niger. To the south it was bounded by French Guinea, the Ivory Coast, Gold Coast and Dahomey. Both the Senegal and Niger rivers rise in the highlands of French Guinea and drain into the territory. The Senegal river, the main means of access to the interior, runs west into Senegal and to the coast at St Louis, and the Niger runs north to Tombouctou and then through the Niger bend south into Nigeria. The northern part is the Sahara desert and below that the Sahel running south into more subtropical conditions of the Volta region with a defined wet season which influences travel in the territory and on the Niger river, impassable in places. The territory is entirely landlocked with access principally by the Senegal river and also, for the south eastern side, via Dahomey down to Cotonou.



Soudan Français

Approximate schematic map of mail routes carried on foot, based on hand drawn map of M. Blanchel, *Commis des Postes*, 8 January 1892, though we have no documentary evidence to support this.

The Report outlines the progress of the *Postes et Télégraphes* by activity, and what follows below is a summary of that together with some explanatory comments.

1. The Telegraph system

The activities of the *Postes et Télégraphes* really only started in 1880 and the primary object was the installation of a telegraph network. Purely postal activities while essential to those serving under the flag or in the Administration were of secondary interest. The first part of the network linked Médine and Bafoulabé with Bakel and the following year the town of Kayes on the Senegal river was founded and became the capital of the territory. Apart from periods of military action the development of the telegraph network went ahead strongly and by the end of 1903 had circuits totalling 7150km covering most of the colony and certainly where it mattered. The use of the telegraph was essentially military and administrative to begin with, but by the end of 1903 there was an increasing volume of private and commercial use. In his 1902 report M. Poisson complains of the abusive use of the network of messages sent under franchise for non official purposes. The 1903 report continues this theme but notes an improvement as a result of the taxation of messages considered outside of the franchise.

The report of 1903 goes into considerable detail about the physical system, the strength and quality of wire and also the posts and other supports. As the network increased so did the upkeep, and this was a problem particularly with budgetary constraints. The cost per kilometre varied widely over the colony because of the different habitat. Trees

were used wherever possible as supports and it followed that the cost of construction in treeless areas was higher. Posts had to be brought in and the quality of the local timber, mainly softwood, was a problem where hardwood was required. This was particularly the case around Tombouctou. It also has to be remembered that timber and other materials could only be moved up in the high water season. An even bigger problem was termites, endemic throughout the colony, and capable of eating through a pole within two years.

Early experiments with the import of metal poles were very successful and these were being used to an increasing extent by the end of 1903.

The 1903 Report welcomes the increasing commercial use of the system and also notes that the indigenous population were also beginning to use it on a more regular basis. By this date the network was connected with Senegal, the Ivory Coast and Dahomey. In view of the enormous distances involved the use of the telegraph played an important part in the expansion of the Colony and in the administration of the Federation of French West Africa as a whole from Dakar.

The 1903 Return reports the shipwreck of the *Sénégalie* with the loss of most of the *P&T*'s printed forms and a great deal of equipment for the telegraph service. It needs to be borne in mind that heavy equipment could only be brought up to Kayes from the coast or direct from France during the high water period. Failure to achieve that put progress behind schedule with a delay to the next season.



Postcard from Kayes to Sens-s/Yonne, France, 16 July 1902
 Franked 10c for the full postcard rate

2. Postal services

Postal services too started in 1880 and by 1903 had not acquired the importance of the telegraph service in terms of revenue. Up until 1896 the sale of postage stamps was insignificant because the majority of the European population was either serving in the army or working in the Administration and had the right of free mail (*franchise postale*). Once the franchise was withdrawn in 1896 the sales of postage stamps began to pick up quickly. The major part of income however came from the surtax charged on parcels, but these charges were considered insufficient to compensate for all the difficulties and inconveniences in dealing with this category of mail.

The sale of postage stamps in 1902 amounted to 37,756F which can be compared to 10,416F in 1898. The overall gross product for the year was 135,462F of which the Telegraph service accounted for 58,000F and the parcel service 27,527F. In 1903 the gross product rose by 84% but the breakdown was not given.¹

3. Registered and insured mail

Specific reference was made to registered mail in the 1903 report covering letters, samples, brochures and journals,

¹ No mention at all was made of the postage stamps themselves in the Reports. This is an important point because, at the time of writing, the Territory was using the May 1894 issue of the "Type Groupe / Soudan Français". The part of *Soudan Français* remaining took the name of *Haut Sénégal et Moyen Niger* in January 1900. This had no philatelic consequence except that two offices, Goundam and Kati, used this name on the date stamps. On 1 October 1902 *Sénégal et Niger* was created and their postage stamps, also "Type Groupe" with the name of the Territory were introduced in July 1903 and remained in place until 1906 when the Territory became *Haut Sénégal & Niger* and the *Type Groupe* was replaced by the *Faidherbe / Palmiers / Ballay* issue.

the volume of which in percentage terms is higher than one would normally see in comparison with normal mail. This is explained by the sender's wish for the additional care and security associated with this category of mail. Poisson states that there were between four and five hundred items of registered mail contained in each bulk despatch of mail to France.

Up until 1885 the Kayes office took part in the exchange of insured mail with France but the mail had to pass in transit to St Louis and, given the means of transport, this was considered as too great a risk and the service was withdrawn in 1886 and had not started again at the date of this report, and, clearly, there was no appetite to do so.

4. Mandates and payment orders

This service was provided by six offices from 1897. It proved to be a great success for those in commerce and trading, often very distant from their customers. With increased security in the territory traders and merchants were setting up ever further from Kayes and this service was ideal for them. Between 1901 and 1902 receipts of the 1% charge increased by over 50%.

5. Parcels

M. Poisson complained that the total cost of the parcel service was a heavy burden on his budget. Originally an agreement had been reached at General Government level to apply a surtax on parcels from France. In 1896 an additional surcharge was made on parcels carried by the service beyond the railway terminal. Even this was not sufficient to cover costs and serious thought had been given to ending the service but this was outweighed by the impact this would have had on the expatriate community who relied very heavily on them.



Tombouctou to Saint Denis (Seine), France, 17 January 1899

cds * **TOMBOUCTOU** * / **SOUDAN FRANÇAIS** (1st type)

Transit: Kayes 13.2; Marseille 9.3; St Denis 10.3

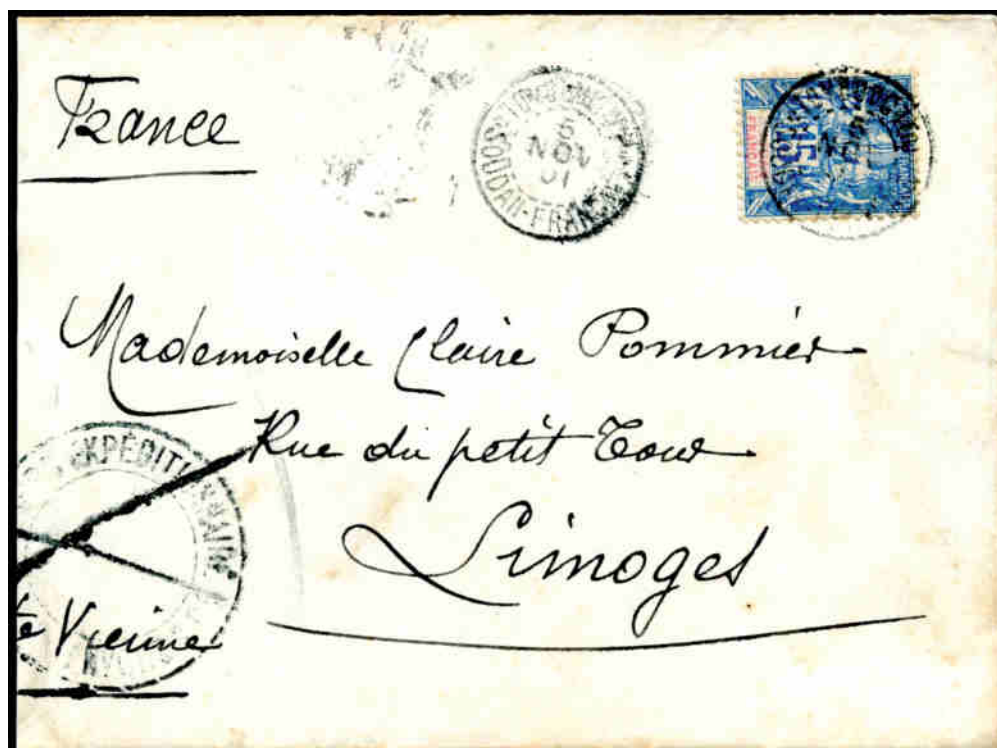
Franked 25c for the overseas rate. This had been reduced to 15c on 1.1.1899. Did they know? (27 days from Tombouctou to Kayes – surprising at a time when the water levels were high, but no doubt explained by the absence or delay of a *piroque*)

6. Post and Telegraph offices open in January 1903²

(Italics = telegraph office only)

Office	Date of opening	Office	Date of opening
Kayes	1881	Koury	5.1897
<i>Aribinda</i>	10.9.1900	Médine	1879
Badumbé	1881	Nampala	24.10.1898
Bafoulabé	1880	<i>Nafadié</i>	1897
Bamako	19.4.1883	Nioro	1891
Bandiagara	19.7.1899	Niamey	9.12.1902
Bobo-Dioulasso	15.6.1899	Ouagadougou	5.1898
<i>Boulal</i>	10.6.1892	<i>Ouo</i>	26.12.1902
Dori	10.1.1901	San	2.1897
<i>Djibo</i>	2.7.1900	Ségou	1.1893
<i>Diefoula</i>	30.12.1902	Sikasso	9.8.1902
<i>Foulanguedou</i>	7.1902	Sokolo	4.1897
Goumbou	23.10.1900	Sorbo-Haoussa	20.10.1902
Goundam	30.3.1899	Sumpi	30.10.1898
<i>Kala</i>	7.1902	Tera	25.8.1902
Kati	1896	Tombouctou	15.2.1896 15.3.1899
Kita	4.3.1882	Yako	6.1897
Koulikoro	10.1895		

² The dates of opening do not always agree with those quoted by *Col.Fra Hors Série 10-1 Soudan Français*. The precise source of their information is not quoted. Some of the information on the dates given by M Poisson may also be anecdotal.



Tombouctou to Limoges (Haute Vienne), France, 6 November 1901

cds * **TOMBOUCTOU** * / **SOUDAN-FRANÇAIS**; military franchise mark applied in error and deleted

Transit time 36 days to Dakar; carried by Line J Brésil, dep Dakar 12.12 ; arr Bordeaux 20.12; received at Limoges 21.12

Franked 15c for the inland and colonial rate, the latter reduced to 15c on 1.1.1899

7. The above gives an idea of the postal services that were on offer at the time and to this we can also add the telephone for which a service started in 1893. By 1903 this included (at Kayes) 28 installations for the use of the Administration. There was a public service in the main post office. There were three lines from Kayes to Médine from Bafoulabé to Mahina and from Tombouctou to Kabara. These were open to the public.

8. The reports give a fascinating and useful amount of detail concerning the transport of the mails and it is here that the Post Office met with its greatest difficulties. In summary these can be considered under four separate headings:

- 8.1 Transport of mails from St Louis to Kayes by rail, river and porter
- 8.2 Transport of mails by porter within the colony
- 8.3 Transport of mails on the Kayes-Koulikoro railway
- 8.4 Transport of mails on the river Niger

The comments that follow are based on the report sent by Poisson to the Permanent Delegate of the Governor General on 10 October 1903.

8.1 Transport of mails from St Louis to Kayes

The report begins by giving a summary of the position at that time which consisted of two different modes of transport depending on the season.

During the season of high water, from 20 August to 20 September sea-going vessels can reach Kayes, 924km from the mouth of the Senegal river, giving direct contact between Europe and Kayes. This is the maximum high water period and this decreases so that by 1 July and 1 December only

barges drawing 2 foot can pass up it. Podor is accessible at all times but beyond there it was impossible to proceed at low water periods. It must be understood that each season is different as regards the date of onset of the rains or the amount of rainfall. The mails for *Sénégalie & Niger* were unloaded at Dakar and carried by rail to St Louis³ and then loaded onto contract steamers for the journey to Kayes or by porter from Podor to Kayes.

The report commented on an improvement in the storage of mails in a special compartment as previous reports had complained about its inferior treatment, thrown roughly into the hold or even the coal bunkers on occasions. A recent decision had been taken for the contract steamers not to tow barges and this shortened the journey.

The dry season runs from November to the end of June (normally) and during this period mails were deposited by the contract steamers at Podor and were carried to Kayes by porter. The hardest and most important question to be resolved concerned the transport of mail by porters and this also included parcels. There was a tremendous difference in the volume of mail entering the territory and leaving it for France. 40-60 porters were required for inward mail carried from Podor to Kayes and only 5-6 from Kayes to Podor. This is quite logical because of the volume of parcels, brochures, journals and samples from France for which there was little reciprocation. People were simply writing home and not often sending anything.

The distance between Podor and Kayes is 700km and there were risks as far as the mails were concerned. This consisted

³ The railway from Dakar to St Louis was completed in 1885. It took until 1924 for the railway from St Louis to Kayes to be completed.



Registered letter from Kayes to Libourne (Gironde), France, 2 March 1900
 Carried by Line K Chile; dep Dakar 24.3; arr Bordeaux 31.12; received Libourne 31.3
 Franked 40c: postage 15c + registration 25c (tariff of 1.1.1899)

mainly of material damage to the mails caused by rubbing or moisture as well as the possibility of loss if a porter abandoned his load or lightened it by throwing away part of the contents.. Attacks by Moors also occurred and three sacks of mail were taken in January 1903.

On arrival at Kayes the mails were frequently found to be damaged with envelopes and letters separated or in pieces, and parcels and samples where the string or wrapping had become detached. This gave a substantial amount of work to the Kayes office in putting it all together again. Equally, tropical storms were a menace with letters sometimes being reduced to a paste.

Improvements both in security and speed were being sought in 1903. Experiments were carried out with two very shallow draught steam launches in November on the upper reaches of the river and these proved highly successful until one of them developed mechanical difficulties. Another method of speeding things up was to organise carts drawn by three horses in relays between Kayes and the Falemé river junction. There was a reasonable track-cum-road of some 95km. Both of these methods came into play in 1904.

Attempts had also been made in 1903 to use steel *pirogues* (canoes) from Podor to Kayes to carry the parcels. This method was cheaper but took 10 days longer than the portage. This was adversely affected by the particularly low water levels in the Senegal river in April and May 2003 but the project was considered promising.

There was also a problem of timing as the time taken to complete the journey from Kayes to Dakar was such that they occasionally missed the boat for France. The target was to get the mails to the coast in 9 days but they were well adrift of that. Another area ripe for improvement was the

transfer of mails at Podor and the possibility of using steam launches (where practicable) for the whole journey and not to transfer mails there.

M Poisson complained that the situation in 1903 was in fact worse than that in 1897 when, in the dry season, mails were reaching Kayes from St Louis in 13 days. This was now far from the case with the period extended to in excess of 20 days at times. The incidents *en route* allied with the difficulty in recruiting porters at Podor meant that it was not possible to predict with accuracy when mails would arrive at Kayes. The consequences of this on onward mail is obvious.

8.2 Transport of mails by porter in the interior of the territory

M. Poisson had strictly forbidden the transport of mail by animals (oxen, donkeys) because of the effect on the mails of being bumped about *en route* so everything was carried on the heads of porters where transport by rail or river was not possible. This did include the use of camels in desert areas which had proved unsuccessful⁴.

The porters were always accompanied by a supervisor who, as well as being in charge of the mails also had responsibility for the maintenance of the telegraph network.

There were few reported incidents of theft or loss in 1902. One sack was stolen in the Mossi region following an attack on an unescorted convoy and a sack was lost due to negligence in the Sahel region. In 1903 the Report states that military escort of convoys had been resumed and this resulted in no losses during the year.

⁴ Later, the transport of mails by camel would be standard in Niger. No doubt a better way of packing the mails was found.



Front and part of reverse of cover Tombouctou to Paris, 27 November 1901,
sent under military franchise, signed by the adjutant
SENEGAL ET DÉPENDANCES / LE Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant / 1^{ER} TERRITOIRE MILITAIRE
cds of Tombouctou and franchise mark **CORPS EXPÉDITIONNAIRE DU SOUDAN FRANÇAIS**
Carried by Line K *La Plata*; dep Dakar 26.1; arr Bordeaux 2.2; received at Paris 3.2

What is truly amazing to us today is the speed of the escorted convoys of porters. A system of relays divided a journey of 100km into two halves and was covered in 24 hours. Similarly a distance of 180km was covered in 2½ days. The average distance covered by couriers was 70 to 75km daily. This was not considered oppressive in the least and, contrary to the position at Podor, there was always an abundant supply of porters available at Kayes. A comment was made that the local population in areas of the Niger bend was not yet familiar with white faces and still feared them and that this gave added security to the mails!

8.3 Transport of mails on the Kayes-Koulikoro railway

By the end of 1903 the railway designed to link Kayes and Koulikoro, its terminus on the river Niger, had reached Bamako. Koulikoro had been chosen as the terminus rather than Bamako, also on the Niger, because of the Sotuba rocks below Bamako which were impassable to vessels. Mails sent from Kayes to points beyond the terminus were carried by porter to Koulikoro from where the *pirogue* service started on the Niger.

There was a moveable box on the train travelling between Kayes and Médine and another on the train to Kita. But the frequency was not mentioned.

At this time there were no special conditions extended to the *Postes & Télégraphes* whose mails were considered as being no different to other goods carried, thus placing pressure on their budget. It appeared then that no thought had been given to the rights of the *P&T* at government level on this issue and the Report contained a plea that the matter should be resolved before the line was completed, which was to take place the following year⁵.

⁵ It was not until 1924 that the railway from Dakar and St Louis on the Senegal coast linked up with the Niger at Koulikoro.

Looking ahead, M Poisson made the point that the volume of mail carried did not justify the presence of a post office employee to accompany the mails (*courrier convoyeur*) but this would be something that had to be considered at a future date should this be warranted.

8.4 Transport of mails on the River Niger

Understanding the geography of the river helps us to understand some of the difficulties in early exploration and in the carriage of the mails. One might be forgiven for thinking that navigation on the river would be easy at all seasons because of its size but this would be wrong. There are two principal elements to consider. First of all, the middle section of the river begins below the Sotuba barrage of rocks immediately upstream of Koulikoro. These rocks allow the formation of rapids and the river is impassable to vessels under steam and can only be used by canoes (*pirogues*), and this explains why Koulikoro was chosen as the terminus point of the railway. The river here is nearly one mile wide with high banks. At Mopti, the river is joined by the Bani nearly 400 miles from its headwaters draining the area around Bougouni and Sikasso. This is also a substantial river and almost the same size as the Niger at the point where they join.

The river then flows into Lake Debo and through a large deltaic area, a large depression some 60 miles wide covered by a network of lakes, channels and "*marigots*" (creeks) the whole of which is inundated during the floods – which brings us to the second point.

Secondly, what influences travel on the river is the water level. Around the end of April heavy rainfall in the area of the headwaters rapidly increases the water level and fills up the vast pan around Lake Debo and nearly up to Tombouctou. This acts as a regulator which gradually drains out around Tombouctou. The low water level period is



Territorial letter from Bandiagara to Tombouctou, 17 November 1901
 Sent by Lt Martin of the Spahis Soudanais to Captain Batz
 who had successfully led a light column into Samo country the previous year
 cds of **BANDIAGARA / SOUDAN-FRANÇAIS**
 and military franchise mark **CORPS EXPÉDITIONNAIRE DU SOUDAN FRANÇAIS**
 No receipt stamp; very little internal mail has survived.

between April and June between Bamako and Ségou, and the highest levels between September and January when the river can be four miles wide.

Towards the end of October the level of water at Bamako begins to fall but below Tombouctou the level is still rising as the flood plains drain back into the river system. Between Ansongo and Say the water levels are at their maximum height in January but have fallen rapidly by mid-March so that only half-laden barges can pass.

From Tombouctou to Ansongo the river flows between sandy banks with the exception of the rocky Tosaye Gorge which is dangerous and then, below Ansongo and as far as Niamey, the river is a mess of rocks and islands interspaced with rapids and is difficult for navigation at any time. From Say, and into Nigeria, the river becomes easily navigable again.

This emphasises the seasonal nature of travel on the river, particularly in transporting materials or goods. The *pirogues*, canoes made of steel, were very light and covered, giving good protection to the mails. They could pass at any time, although with difficulty in some areas.

The Report prepared for 1903 only mentions mails carried on the middle Niger from Koulikoro as far as Ansongo, and M. Poisson makes no reference to the Upper Niger,

accessible from Bamako⁶.

The distance from Ségou to Koulikoro (upstream) was 200km and the time taken for the journey was between 26 and 36 hours. And the 1000km from Koulikoro to Tombouctou, landing at Kabara (downstream), was covered in 8-10 days by a team of 6 paddlers (Somas or Bozos) travelling night and day in relays. This included halts at Ségou, Mopti (for mail for the Macina region), Sebi for Sumpi mail, El-Oualedji for Goundam mail. Below Tombouctou there is an annexe service going as far downstream as Ansongo. M. Poisson stressed that this was organised from Tombouctou and that the P&T had no control over *pirogues* operating below Kabara.

While the Report was very complimentary about the service it was critical of the schedule of the *pirogues* carrying

⁶ Bamako is at the head of the navigable section of the Upper Niger connecting with the southern areas of the territory leading to the frontier with French Guinea. The river was navigable as far as Siguiri and Dinguiray (on the Tankisso, a branch of the Niger), for shallow draught barges of 2-3 tonnes throughout the year and as far as Kouroussa and Kankan (on the Milo, also a branch of the Niger) from June to December. For the purposes of commerce merchants hired *pirogues* from the local people or barges from the Administration. The offices of Kouroussa, Kankan and Siguiri were in the circles transferred from French Soudan to French Guinea in 1900 so whatever system had been in place prior to that date must have ended with the transfer.

INDICATIONS DE RÉCEPTION

Télégramme

Indications de service.

Place du timbre

INDICATIONS DE TRANSMISSION

134

No 700 (anc. 307).

Pour de *Kouroussa* No *608* Mots *21* Dépôt le *24*, à *2 h. 30* m. du

Cercle Dinguiray à Région Sud Ouest

n° 268 ma Lettre 259 a précédé 256 au sujet

des nombre de cartouches arrières

Telegram from Kouroussa, the Dinguiray Circle to Southern Region Siguiri, 24 July 1899

cds **SIGUIRI / SOUDAN FRANÇAIS**; sent under military franchise

Message reads: "My letter 259 preceded 256 in respect of damaged cartridges."

The Siguiri and Kouroussa offices were ceded to French Guinea in 1900.

Telegram forms at this time are not often seen because they were mainly used by the military and administration as well as being extremely fragile.

mail upstream to Koulikoro which occasionally reached there after the mails for France had left. There was a need for synchronisation. The mails were sent down from Kayes to St Louis and Dakar at fortnightly intervals and the number of different modes of transport and transshipment made it extremely complicated, and the target of getting it to operate smoothly was a considerable headache for the P&T. Examination of letters during the period of this study show the wide variation of times taken from distant parts of the territory to Dakar.

There was also a very important announcement in the Report to the effect that the existing *pirogue* service would be replaced by steam launches where the seasonal state of the river permitted⁷.

9. Personnel

In 1903 the post office staff consisted of:-

1. Expatriate *Postes & Télégraphes* staff (total 15)
2. Local staff appointed by the Governor General and recruited either in France or in the colony (total 25)
3. Military telegraphists (total 21)
4. Locally appointed supervisors in charge of the telegraph lines and local postmen distributing telegrams

Essentially the 35 offices in the Colony were run by a total staff of 61.

10. Premises

The standard of premises was said, in the 1902 Report, not to be satisfactory, but work was being done on the new main post office at Kayes and the Bamako office was being reroofed. The Kita office was situated in the building belonging to the Administration and the Ségou office was being repaired after a severe termite attack. The new office being built at the rail terminus at Koulikoro was said to be "remarkable". Many offices were constructed of mud/clay with a straw thatched roof and some were totally in clay. As usual, local resources were used wherever possible but, as ever, there was a need for something better.

⁷ The two steam launches became operational in 1905 (Source: H Tristant, *Courriers fluviaux postaux du Niger* Bulletin SAMP N° 11, 3rd trimestre 1965)

Things obviously got better in 1903 with many offices being improved and substantial work being carried out at Kayes, Bamako and Koulikoro.

Acknowledgement

My thanks to Patrick Maselis for having kindly drawn my attention to M. Poisson's Reports and for all the trouble he took in preparing copies for me.

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A Few Months after the Abolition of Slavery, a Letter from St Lucia to France

Robert Abensur

translated by Peter Kelly

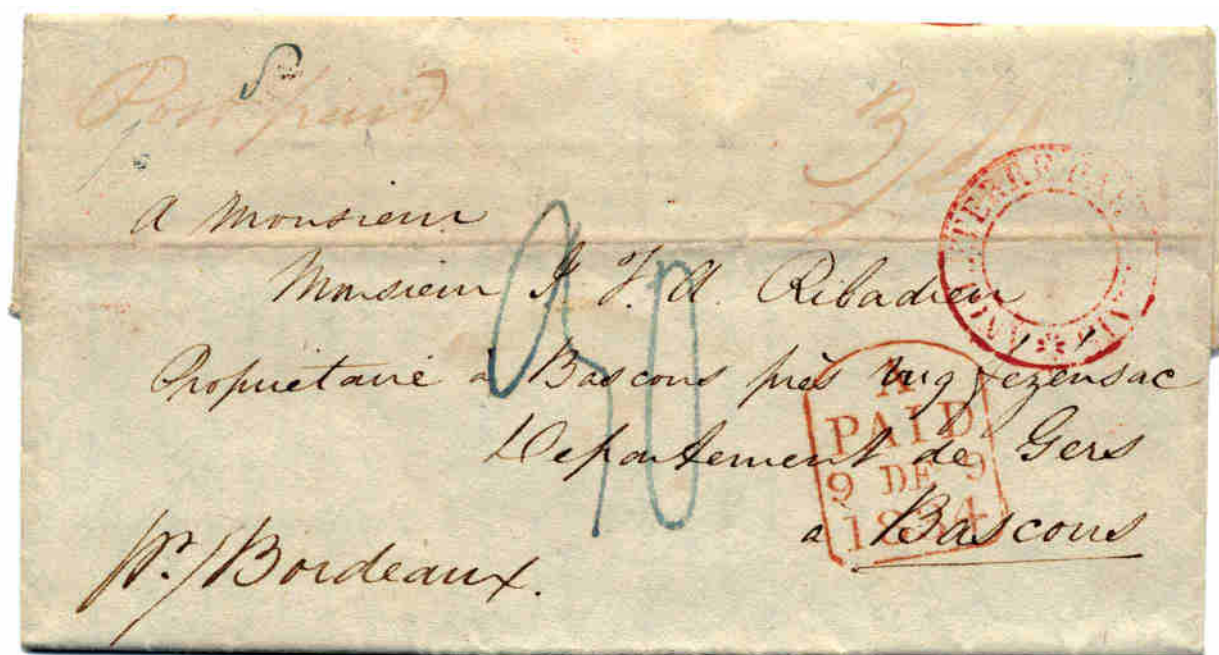


Figure 1

The obligation to trade exclusively with the mother country was no longer the rule in the 19th Century but depended largely on custom and practice. Postal relations followed economic movement and confirmed this. Letters exchanged between the old France and the old British colonies are not met with very often.

I have been fortunate to acquire this fine letter of 1834 sent from St Lucia to France (Fig 1). This small volcanic island, not far from Martinique was, since the 17th Century, the subject of intense Franco-British rivalry and changed hands on a number of occasions. In 1814, the island became British and remained so until its independence in 1979.

The route

This letter, for Bascours, near to Vic-Fezensac in the Gers *département* is paid from St Lucia to Calais and then taxed to destination.

In 1834, the Franco-British convention in force, that of 1833, did not allow the exchange of unpaid letters. The two offices delivered paid letters as far as Dover when they came from France and to Calais when they came from England. The 1833 convention introduced an exception. It became possible to pay in France, over and above the French portion, the foreign postage when carried by regular British mailboats¹. However, the opposite did not apply and letters from overseas by this route could not be paid to destination in France. The general rule was followed with

payment as far as Calais but it would also have been necessary for there to have been an English postal establishment to receive and frank the letter.

This is the case of our letter that was handed to the St Lucia posts ('ST LUCIA' arched handstamp on the back - Fig 2) where it was franked 3 shillings and four pence ('post paid' and '3/4' in red ink on the front). This figure is made up by 2/2d for the 'packet letter' rate from St Lucia to London via Falmouth (GPO notice of 1 January 1817) and 1/2d from London to Calais (GPO notice 25 April 1814).

The French taxation of 30 décimes, written in blue on the front at Paris, is calculated on the basis of a letter weighing between 7.5 and less than 10 grams which represents a charge of 1.5 times the basic rate. The weight '8' is in fact inscribed in the top left hand corner by the French post office who also added the red entry mark (ANGLETERRE PAR CALAIS / *).

On the comparative basis of a single weight step, 20 décimes, the rate is broken down into 6 décimes from England to Calais, 3 décimes obligatory charge for the *estafette* from Calais to Paris, and 11 décimes from Calais to Vic-Fezensac (750-900km at the French inland rate of 1 January 1828).

Note that, at this time, the French post office was also making a charge for the Dover to Calais section which amounted to a deliberate duplication.

The letter, dated 4 November at St Lucia, reached London on 9 December (handstamp 'A/PAID' in red on the front) and therefore took less than 35 days to cross the Atlantic on board the British mailboat.

¹ Circular N° 18 of the *Administration des Postes* of 17 August 1833. At this time the British Admiralty operated a regular mailboat service from Falmouth under sail in particular to the Antilles (Leewards and Jamaica packets - each on a monthly basis).



Figure 2

The contents

In 1834, there still remained plantation owners of French origin in the island, and it is one of these, a certain Widow C....., with a very French name, who wrote to one of her creditors in France to ask for an advance payment. She was an owner of slaves writing about the recent abolition of slavery in the British colonies.

Following a decree of the 'Convention' in February 1794, France was the first to abolish slavery in its colonies. In 1802 slavery was re-established by Napoleon I. The signal

had been given however and during the 19th Century, one by one, the different American countries decided to abolish it. Among the colonial powers, Great Britain was the first to take the lead in abolishing slavery in the majority of their colonies on 1 August 1834.

Our letter fits in with this, being written only a few months after this decision. It is written from Soufrière, the place dominated by the two peaks (Fig 3 - photo taken by the author in 2009) which figures symbolically on the present-day flag of St Lucia.



Figure 3

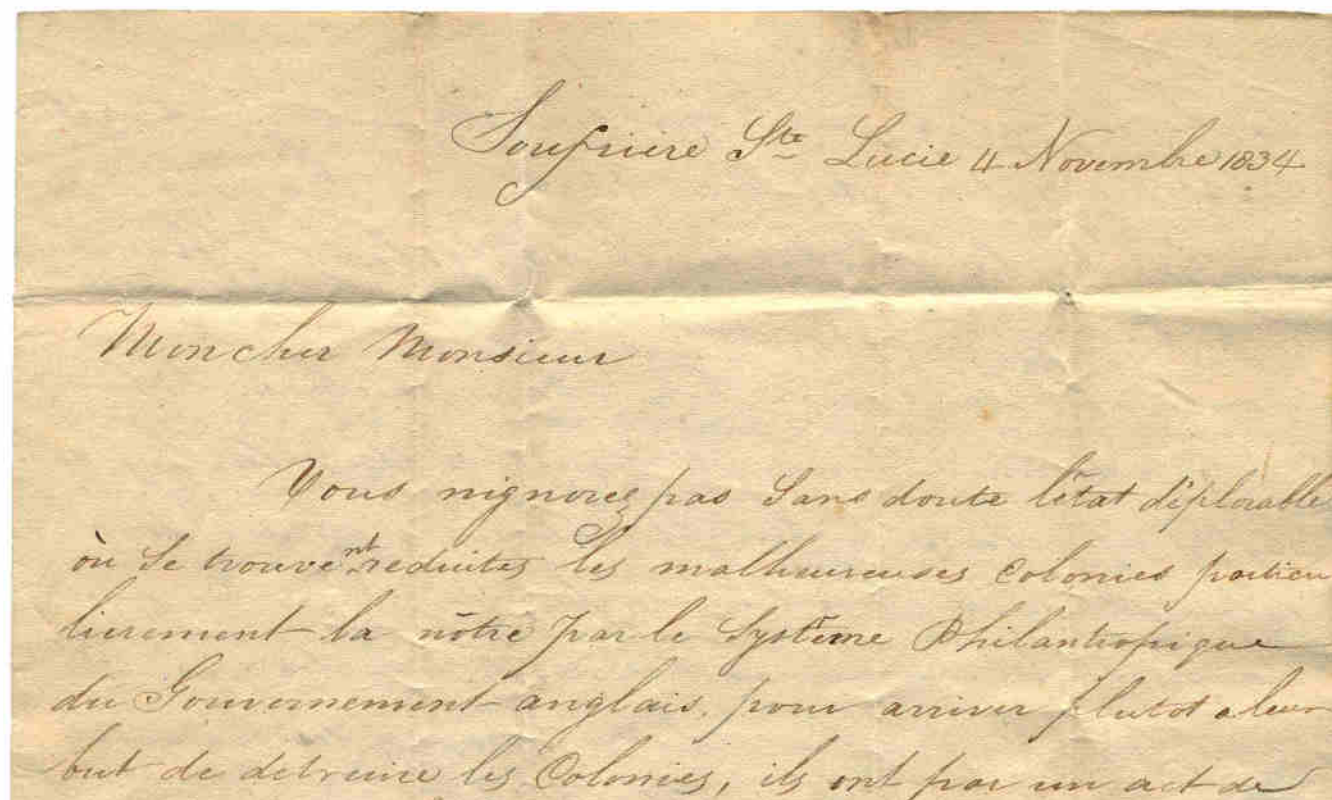


Figure 4 - Top of the letter translated below, slightly reduced in size

Here is the text of the letter (Fig 4) from which I have excluded some sentences of little interest and have added some notes by way of historical explanation.

"Soufrière St Lucia, 4 November 1834

My dear Sir,

You will, no doubt, be aware of the awful state to which the unfortunate colonies, particularly ours, have been reduced by the philanthropic system of the British Government. To reach their aim of more or less destroying the colonies, they have by an Act of Parliament abolished slavery² and in order not to appear unfair in the eyes of the world for having deprived the owners of their subjects, they have subjected the freed Negroes to an apprenticeship of 6 years at a heavy cost which one can scarcely support, the income from their poor work being halved given the reduced number of hours in the day that the law allows their masters to employ them³. They intend to indemnify the owners with a part of the value of their freed slaves, by virtue of this Act of Parliament, and in order to delay making this payment or trying never to pay this indemnity, they have adopted the rules entitled General Rule for compensating owners of freed slaves by the Act of Parliament without mentioning the price that must be allowed for each slave. All they have done is to have voted a sum of twenty million sterling which comes out at 1000 colonial pounds per

slave⁴. In settling this they took great care in raising matters to draw out the negotiations with the rightful creditors in order to defer the moment of payment. [...] In view of the friendship that you have always shown us, I hope that you will not be the last as are all the others to allow us an advance of one third of the sum that is due to us. Given that this third is only a part of the interest on your capital and for the ruined inhabitants⁵ this is the only way to obtain liquidity and without that the interests of us all will be overwhelmed by this endless chicanery. [...]

Awaiting your prompt reply to our owners we extend to you and your wife our best wishes and have the sincere honour to be, my dear Sir, your humble and obedient servant.

Widow C..."

It goes without saying that we most certainly do not share the views expressed by the author of this letter but these crude sentiments, devoid of any humanity, are a witness of a past that is not so very distant.

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² An Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies; for promoting the Industry of the manumitted Slaves; and for compensating the Persons hitherto entitled to the Services of such Slaves, 3 & 4 Will. 4 c 73, 28 August 1833.

³ The slaves, according to the terms of this decision by the British Parliament, became apprentice workers (apprentices) for a maximum period of 6 years with effect from 1 August 1834 before becoming completely free. During this period, they owed to their old owner 45 hours of work per week. In exchange, their old owner had the duty to feed, clothe, lodge and care etc and they could not be forced to work on Sundays.

⁴ Sum voted for the whole of the British colonies. However, the text did not apply to Ceylon, Saint Helena and to territories belonging to the East India Company. 13,291 slaves were liberated on Saint Lucia and their old owners received 3,341,495 pounds representing an average indemnity per slave of 251 pounds.

⁵ The freeing of the slaves really did result in the economic bankruptcy of plantations dependent on growing and treating sugar cane which needed a heavy manual input. Many plantations were forced to change their activity or go under.

An unusual *articles d'argent* letter of 1779

Peter Maybury



Figure 1

History

The term *articles d'argent* referred to monies deposited with the post office, or a private messenger service, for delivery to a nominated third party.

The earliest reference to *articles d'argent* is to be found in the tariff of 1627 which prescribed a maximum sum to be transferred of 100 *livres*. (Interestingly this limit is not reiterated in any of the subsequent tariffs). Each transaction was to be recorded in a register, with a "reasonable" charge, proportionate to the distance involved, levied for the service.

The tariff of 1644 established a rate of 1 *sol* per *livre* irrespective of the sum involved or the distance to be carried, i.e. a fixed rate of 5%, payable by either the sender or designated recipient.

A directive of 20 August 1757 stipulated:

- 1) The recipient of an *article d'argent* should receive a letter requesting his presence at the receiving office to collect and sign for his monies. This letter was to be sent under franchise, providing it was endorsed *article* and was not sealed.
- 2) The *directeurs des postes* had no authority to vary the commission rate of 5%.
- 3) Monies sent via the post must not be enclosed in an envelope, but should be in a bag fastened to the advice note relative to the transaction.

All commissions were deemed to be for the benefit of the *directeur* of the paying office but under certain circumstances could be shared with his/her counterpart at the office of despatch.

5% remained the rate for unsecured funds carried by the postal authorities until 1 January 1849.

The service was not available for transfers to foreign destinations.

The letter

Dated 5 July 1779 this letter (Fig 1) was sent by a *procureur** with a recovered debt of 177 *livres* from NÎMES (handstamp Lenain 9, used from 1777 to 1791) to a solicitor representing *la comtesse de Belin Malain*, in VITTEAUX in Burgundy. Sent unpaid and routed via the *Bureau de Passe* at Lyon, it thus attracted a double *taxe* of 15 *sols* (tariff of 1 August 1759) being Nîmes to Lyon 7 *sols* + Lyon to Vitteaux 7 *sols* + 1 *sol* extra for a small enclosure, probably the post office acknowledgement for the sum involved in the transaction. On the reverse (Fig 2) is the post clerk's calculation of the net amount to be paid i.e. 168 *livres* and 3 *sols*.

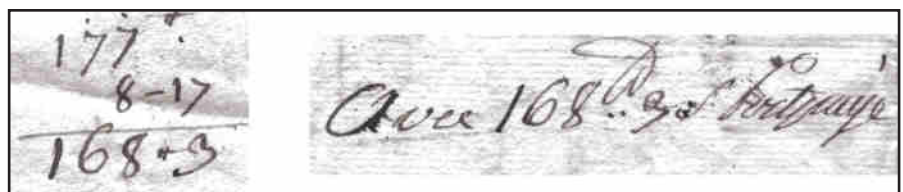


Figure 2

In the letter the writer states that he has given 177 *livres* to the *courier* (Fig 3) and this, together with the 5% commission, indicates it was entrusted to the post and not to a messenger service (*les messageries*) which although less expensive would have effected a less speedier delivery. Finally the letter is endorsed with the receipt of *Madame la Comtesse* for the appropriate sum, which was remitted to her on 16 July 1779.

* At this period an official appointed to manage the financial affairs of an individual or estate.

Nîmes le 5 Juillet 1779

Monsieur

Madame la Comtesse de Belin Malain Dourville

me charge de vous faire passer la somme que M^r l'abbé de Belin lui déposit et que j'ay retirée du receveur de M^r l'Evêque de cette Ville, en conséquence de la procuration, j'ay remis au Courrier la somme de 177^l. J'ay seulement retenu trois livres pour le port des lettres, le receveur de M^r l'Evêque m'a payé les autres frais, je vous prie de m'accuser de suite la réception de 177^l pour ma décharge, je suis bien charmé que cette occasion me procure l'avantage de vous adresser des sentiments sincères avec lesquels j'ay l'honneur d'être

Monsieur

Votre très humble & très obéissant serviteur

Barère

Procurer

Figure 3

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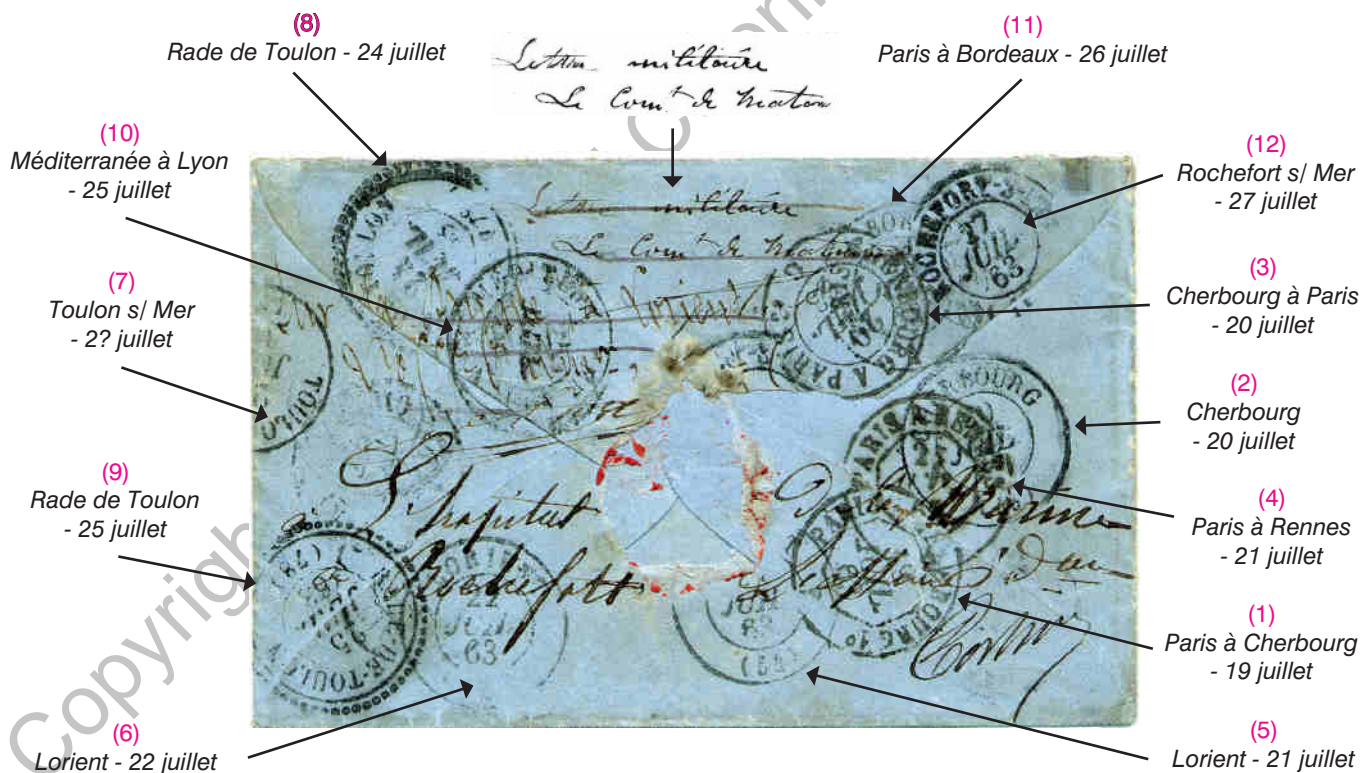
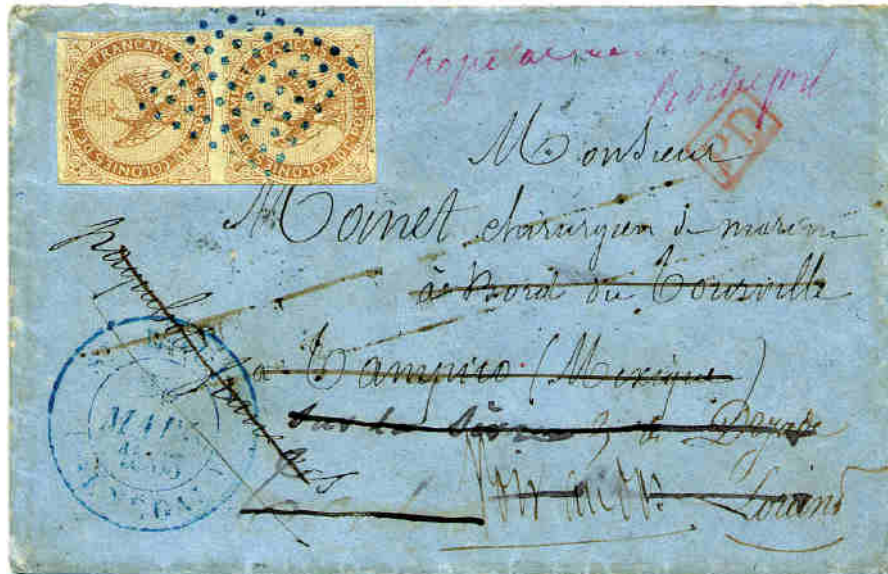
Michèle Chauvet and Robert Abensur for their help and encouragement

From Senegal to the Mexican Expedition of 1863...

... Looking for Naval Surgeon Moinet

Michèle Chauvet

Translated by Peter Kelly



This letter dated 26 March 1863 was written by an officer based at Matam, a forward military post on the upper Senegal river, which is borne out by the manuscript marking on the back 'Lettre militaire, le Com' de Matam'. Matam is situated 410km from St Louis, the nearest post office.

It is addressed to another officer, Naval Surgeon Moinet, on board the *Tourville* at Tampico, therefore part of the unfortunate Mexican Expedition.

The *Tourville* was a vessel of the Imperial Navy, that had already served in the Baltic during the Crimean War before joining the Mexican Expeditionary Corps from July to December 1862.

The letter is correctly franked 20c, the French inland rate (Law of 27 June 1792), because it was military correspondence: the octagonal date stamp, specific to military correspondence was not in use in Senegal in March 1863, but

the manuscript marking of the senior officer confirms the military status of the sender. In any case, the name and address of the addressee also gives right to the preferential rate available on military letters carried by French vessels.

The manuscript marking on the front, "*paquebot français*", is crossed out: contrary to the original intention, the letter was not carried by French mailboat and, besides, there is no entry mark on the letter indicating arrival in France that would correspond with the arrival of the mailboat. The letter was therefore forwarded direct to Mexico by a naval vessel which had to join the military expedition.

It probably reached Mexico in May 1863 after a voyage which could have taken a little more than a month, but it missed the *Tourville* which had already sailed from Mexico for Cherbourg where it could be found from April 1863.

On the envelope, the name *Tourville* was crossed out and replaced by the name of another ship in Mexico, the *Sèvre*, a screw transport which had been in Mexico since 1862 and would stay there until 1864. But Naval Surgeon Moinet was not on board.

The name of the *Sèvre* was therefore crossed out and replaced by the words '*Dryade Lorient*', again on the front, and a reference on the back making the matter clear '*On the Dryade at Lorient / Administrative Officer / [signature]*'. In effect, the *Dryade*, with Vice-Admiral Jurien de la Gravière on board, left Mexico on 22 April 1863 and arrived at Lorient on 25 May.

Our letter to Mexico has now been there for about a month and it is now the moment for it to return to France profiting, almost certainly, from the return to France of a vessel of the Imperial Navy.

Its travels in France are clearly recorded on the back by 14 date stamps, of which two are unfortunately illegible, but still allow us to establish the chronology of the route taken.

The letter reached France, four months after having left Senegal, and was probably sent to the *Ministère de la Marine* who, in principle, should have known where the addressee was. Quite logically, the letter was sent to Cherbourg where the *Tourville* had been based since April 1863.

19 July 1863	Paris to Cherbourg (1)
20 July 1863	Cherbourg (2)
20 July 1863	Cherbourg to Paris (TPO) (3): Moinet was not on the <i>Tourville</i> and the letter was returned to the Ministry.

The letter was sent to Lorient where the *Dryade* was based.

2? July 1863	Paris to Rennes (TPO) (4)
21 July 1863	Lorient (5)
22 July 1863	Lorient (6): Moinet could still not be found.

On the front in scarcely legible handwriting '*Toulon*'

The letter is sent to Toulon.

2? July 1863	Toulon-sur-Mer (7)
24 July 1863	Rade de Toulon (8)
25 July 1863	Rade de Toulon (9): The letter leaves Toulon without having found Moinet.

On the front '*Toulon*' is crossed out.

The letter returns to Paris.

25 July 1863	Mediterranean to Lyon (TPO) (10)
	On the front: Marked in red at the top of the letter: <i>Hôpital de Rochefort</i> .

Paris sends the letter to Rochefort.

26 July 1863	Paris to Bordeaux (TPO) (11)
27 July 1863	Rochefort sur Mer (12)

On the back: Confirmation of
arrival '*l'hôpital de la Marine /
l'Officier d'administration / [signature]*' (Naval hospital / Administration Officer)

We reach the end of a four month journey and on 27 July 1863 Naval Surgeon Moinet may well have been able, at last, to read his letter!

In concluding, we can point out that if the letter, as was intended by the sender, had taken the French mailboat of the '*Ligne de Brésil*' when it called at Cape Verde it would have reached France at the end of April, and the Ministry could have sent it immediately to the *Tourville* that arrived at Cherbourg with Naval Surgeon Moinet on board, waiting for his future appointment to the *Escadre d'évolution* (squadron on manoeuvres) in the Mediterranean... This is what the *Archives de la Marine* tell us.

Note

The information given on the movement of different naval ships has been obtained from the archives of the '*Marine*' department of the '*Service Historique de la Défense*' at Vincennes (Series BB5 56, BB5 133, BB5 137* and CC).

Postes, Prost and Pétain

Mick Bister



Figure 1
The first Vichy Régime issue
depicting Marshal Pétain and inscribed *Postes Françaises*
(Y&T 472)

When the Germans entered Paris on 14 June 1940 it heralded the end of the seventy-year-old Third Republic. On 10 July 1940 the National Assembly granted extraordinary powers to Pétain, the last *Président du Conseil* of the Third Republic, who then took the additional title *Chef de l'État Français*. Pétain headed the reactionary programme of the so-called *Révolution nationale*, aimed at regenerating the nation, and replaced the traditional republican motto of '*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*' with '*Travail, Famille, Patrie*.'

Earlier, in September 1939, the printing presses of the boulevard Brune in Paris had been transferred to Limoges where they had continued to operate until September 1940, by which time it was safe for them to be returned to the capital. This upheaval had serious repercussions on the printing of new issues and the first so-called Vichy Régime stamp was not issued until January 1941. The stamp in question was the 1F Marshal Pétain.

Jules Piel's initial design depicted Pétain in his 1918 uniform accompanied by the legend *République Française* but when the stamp was issued the design had been modified according to instructions received from Vichy. The uniform had been updated to a more modern attire and *République Française* had been excised and replaced by *Postes Françaises* thereby reinforcing the succession of the republic by the state. Upon receiving a copy of the issued stamp, Pétain was reported to have been not only extremely pleased with his portrait but also impressed by the high quality of workmanship involved in the engraving and delighted by the fact that the stamp had been printed on the rotary recess presses (Fig 1).

In the same month, the PTT announced its plans to issue a new set of small format definitive stamps. The previous definitives depicting Mercury, Iris and Cérès and inscribed *République Française* would be replaced by a new series depicting Pétain and, in accordance with the Marshal's wishes, inscribed *Postes Françaises*. Unlike the 1 franc issue, the definitives would be printed by the typographi-

cal process. Jean Berthelot, the *Secrétaire d'État aux Communications* sent a letter (the copy held in the *Musée de la Poste* is undated) to the *École des Beaux-Arts* asking them to recommend artists capable of producing a suitable design.

"My administration is proposing to replace the current series of definitive stamps with a new series depicting Marshal Pétain which will be printed by the typographical process."

I would be grateful if you could give me as soon as possible the names and addresses of designers whom we could call upon to provide the artwork for these stamps."

In February the PTT received a phone call from the *Beaux Arts* saying they would oblige, but by the end of March no such list had materialised. A reminder was sent on 24 March to Monsieur Hauteceur, *Secrétaire Général des Beaux-Arts* stating that the situation was becoming urgent and that it would be appreciated if this list could be sent without further delay.

This reminder clearly had its desired effect for on 27 March 1941 M. Bernard, *Directeur de la Poste et des Bâtiments* was able to send out a letter inviting the recommended artists to submit their artwork for consideration. Eight designers were initially contacted – Albert Decaris, Jean-Émile Laboureur, Constant Le Breton, M. Perrichon, Jean-Vital Prost, Albert Turin, Eugène Bersier and a Mlle Faure. Of these eight, five could not or would not participate – Constant Le Breton (too busy), Laboureur (convalescing), Perrichon (moved house), Faure and Turin (no reply) and for some unknown reason Albert Decaris's name was removed from the list. Subsequently, a further twelve artists were contacted – Paul-Pierre Lemagny, Antonin Delzers, Jules Piel, Georges Hourriez, René Gregoire, Pierre Gandon, Raoul Serres, Charles Mazelin, Achille Ouvre, Henry Cheffer, André Jacquemin and M. Jeauinsson – several of whom were already well established names in stamp design or would soon become so.

II Maquettes Pétain

Artistes	Maquettes remises	Cibon du 28/4/41	
5/3 Serres	1		
3/3 Nagelin	1		
3/3 Ouvré	3	1	
10/3 Cheffer	2		
28/3 Jacquemin	1		
1/4 Jeanninon	1		
31/3 Lemagny	3	3	
2/3 Picton	1	1	Excuse de ne pouvoir participer au concours
31/3 Bersier	4	1	
M^{lle} Taurie	1	1	ne s'est pas présentée
Léonard	1	1	Excuse de ne pouvoir participer au concours
Bernichon	1	1	Inconnu à l'adresse donnée
31/3 Prost	2	2	
Berwin	1	1	ne s'est pas présentée

Figure 2
Notes recording selection of Pétain designs
© Musée de la Poste

Thirty-one designs were submitted by the fourteen artists and, on a hurriedly drawn up list dated 28 April 1941, the winning designers were identified – Ouvré, Bersier, Prost and Lemagny (Fig 2). Unfortunately, the *Musée de la Poste* does not have copies of the letters sent out to the winners but later records omit Ouvré's name so one can only assume that his design was later rejected. On 19 June 1941, the *Secrétaire d'État aux Communications* informed the chief engineer at the *Atelier* to authorise the payment of 4000 francs to the three successful artists Lemagny, Prost and Bersier and 1000 francs to the unsuccessful eleven.

Three months later, on 7 August, the new *Directeur des Postes et des Bâtiments*, M. Pignochet, wrote to head postmasters announcing the new issues.

"It has been decided to replace the current issues up to the 3 francs value by a new series of stamps depicting the Marshal."

These small format stamps printed by the typographical process will comprise three different designs each referred to by the name of the stamp designer:

Low values: Type Prost

Middle values: Type Lemagny

High values: Type Bersier

The printing of the 1F Type Lemagny is currently underway and the stamp will be put on sale initially in Vichy and in Paris at some time during August. Other offices will receive their stocks, upon their request, as and when production at the Atelier permits; bear in mind the need to dispose of the current stock of the 1F Iris which henceforth must be sold as a priority."

The 1F Type Lemagny was duly issued on 12 August 1941, the 3F Type Bersier on 14 October and the first of the Type Prost designs, the 30c value, was issued a few days later on 25 October (Fig 3). Within days, it was evident that the Prost design had not met the Marshal's approval. In a handwritten memo dated 7 November 1941, M. Pignochet was tipped off by the *Ministre des PTT* about rumours emanating from Vichy.

"Will you come and talk to me about the Pétain stamps? The 30c Prost has caused a real stir at Vichy." (Fig 4)



Figure 3
The 30c Type Prost
(Y&T 506)
(enlarged 200%)

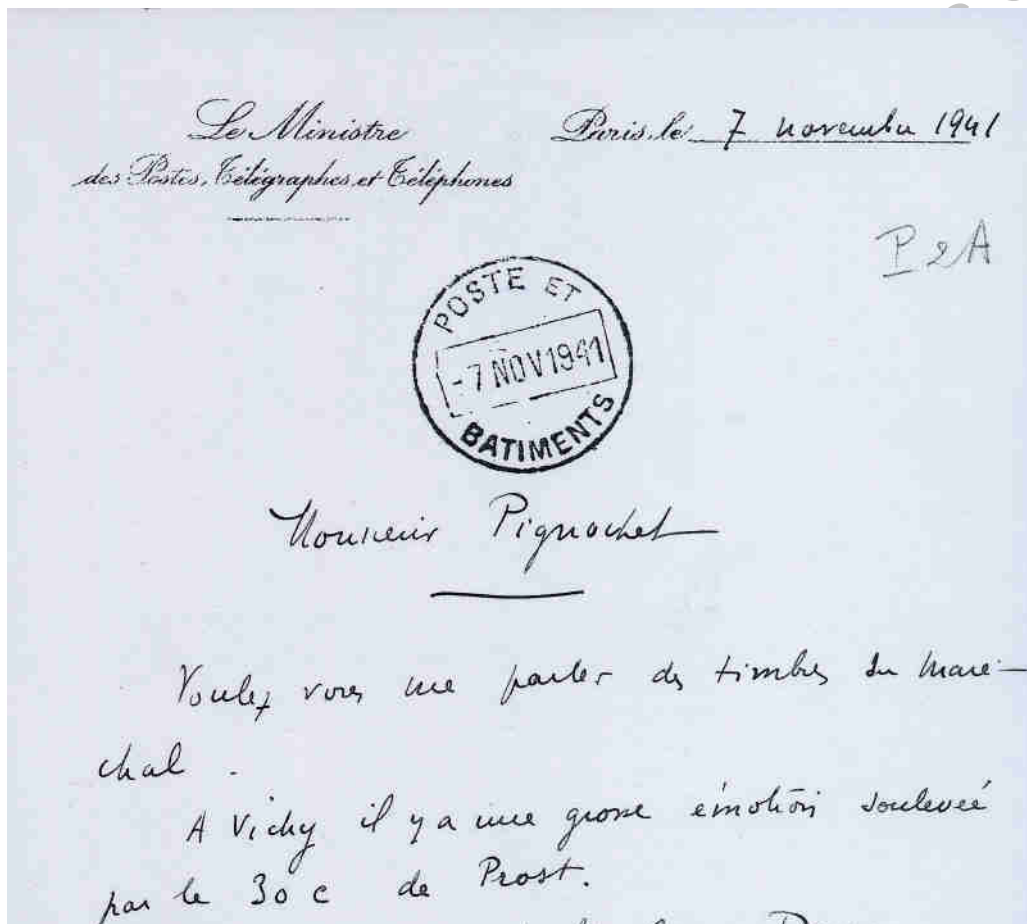


Figure 4
Extract from memo to M. Pignochet
© Musée de la Poste

On 17 November a letter from Vichy dated 8 November 1941 arrived on the desk of the *Secrétaire d'État*. It was typed on the headed notepaper of the *Cabinet Civil du Maréchal Pétain* and was signed by Henri du Moulin de Labarthète, Chief of Civilian Staff from July 1940 to April 1942.

"I am writing to inform you that the Marshal's attention has been drawn to the technical deficiency and to the lack of aesthetic quality found in the printing of the set of low value stamps (particularly the 30c) depicting the

Marshal.

I would be grateful if you would take the necessary steps to halt as quickly as possible the release of these stamps.

Furthermore, in order to avoid a repeat of similarly uninspiring issues, would you instruct the parties concerned to produce firstly, for the low values, a design which is not a portrait and secondly, for the higher values, a line engraved stamp." (Fig 5)

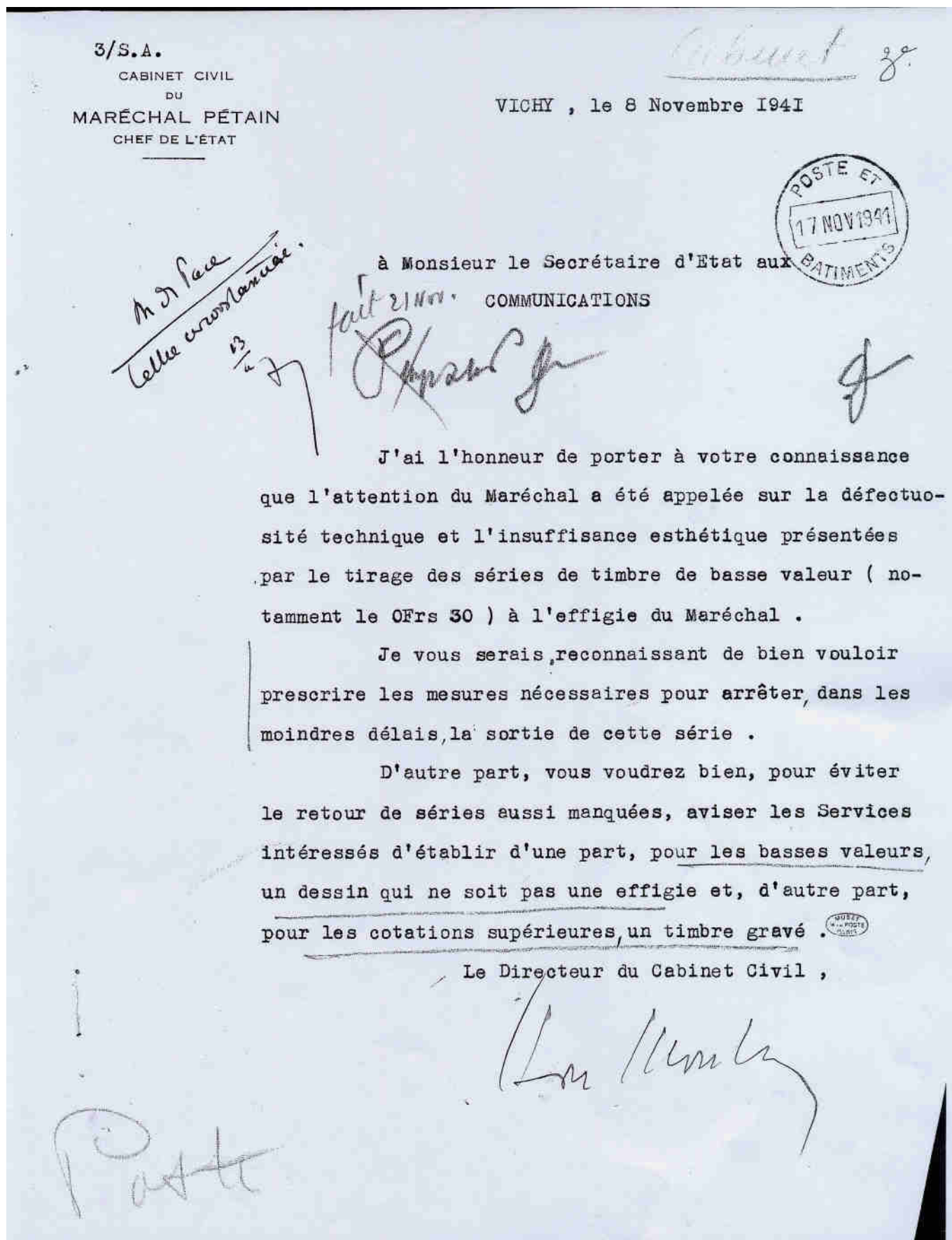


Figure 5
Letter of complaint from Vichy regarding the 30c Type Prost
(slightly reduced in size to fit the page)
© Musée de la Poste



Figure 6

Jean Berthelot, *Secrétaire d'État aux Communications* (September 1940 - April 1942)

© www.x-resistance.polytechnique.org

Was Pétain's reaction really so unexpected? The design was universally regarded as an unmitigated failure – not only by Pétain but also by the public and the philatelic press. Jean-Vital Prost was not a stamp designer. He was a teacher at the École Estienne of fine arts where his forte was wood engravings and producing illustrations and plates for books. Not only did he design the stamp but he was also employed to engrave the die – but this was likely to have been the first time he had created anything on such a reduced scale. He was a man of great experience and talent when working with wood but clearly he failed to transfer his dexterity to steel. The result was a creation of broad lines and extreme contrasts which highlighted the inscriptions at the expense of the poorly executed portrait of the Marshal who was left lurking in the shadows.

On 8 December 1941, a full response was dispatched to Vichy by Jean Berthelot, *Secrétaire d'État aux Communications* (Fig 6) of which the following is an extract.

"I am pleased to inform you that upon receipt of your communication, I ordered the printing of the 5c, 10c, 20c, 30c and 40c values to cease. These stamps will be replaced by the Mercury issues of the same value which are still available. Because of the shortage of paper and in order to avoid any speculative action the current 20c, 30c and 40c Prost stamps will continue to be sold until stocks are exhausted.

With regards to the higher value stamps I share entirely your point of view on the advantages of line engraved stamps over printings by typography and I anticipate extending the use of this process in the future. For the moment though the equipment available to the Imprimerie does not allow us to engage fully in such a programme. The printing of line engraved stamps is a relatively new process and the equipment that the

Atelier does have at the moment can be used only for limited special issues. For our definitive issues, typography remains the preferred option as the line engraved process demands costlier machinery, a higher paid work force and needs better quality paper than that tolerated by typography.....

..... I have nevertheless decided to print, for the foreign letter rate, a line engraved stamp which will be seen worldwide. The die is in the process of being engraved and the printing of the new stamp can take place once the envisaged rate increases have been adopted and the new foreign letter rate confirmed.

As for the other stamps, which will continue to be printed by typography, extra care will be taken with their production. Very careful monitoring will take place especially regarding the effectiveness of the ink distribution when the paper is being pressed against the raised parts of the cylinder and the continuous inking of which is softening the details of the design and impairing its clarity. It has to be said that such deficiencies are exacerbated when the paper is not of the best quality. It so happens that the paper currently being manufactured is far from satisfying our requirements and creates problems not only in typography but also in line engraved printing. This situation could prevent the development of line engraved definitives when the Atelier does have such machines at its disposal.

Be that as it may, I give you my assurance that the printers will keep a careful watch over the quality of the typographical printings of the stamps showing the Marshal's portrait. At the same time, we look forward to being able to extend our use of the line engraved process which you have clearly shown a preference for."

Jean Berthelot



Figure 7
30c Mercury *République Française*
(Y&T 412)
(enlarged 200%)



Figure 8
30c Mercury *Postes Françaises*
(Y&T 547)
(enlarged 200%)

True to his word, Jean Berthelot cancelled the production of the 5c and 10c Prost issues before any printings could be made. As for the remaining three Prost values, printings had already taken place. The 20c had been printed from 3 to 7 November with a run of 5,400,000 stamps and issued on 4 December, the 30c from 3 to 30 October with a run of 37,950,000 stamps and issued on 25 October, and the 40c from 18 October to 18 November with a run of 14,350,000 stamps and issued on 30 October. All these had been printed before the receipt of the complaint and they continued to be sold, as Berthelot had explained, as their withdrawal would only lead to speculation on the philatelic market and to accusations of paper wastage from other government departments and from the press. A courteous note from Vichy dated 12 December 1941 thanked Jean Berthelot for his response and for his good intentions.

To replace the disfavoured 20c, 30c and 40c *Type Prost* issues, cylinders that had previously printed the Third Republic Mercury stamps designed by Hourriez were recalled despite the fact that the stamps were inscribed *République Française* instead of the required *Postes Françaises* – a point which Berthelot had prudently omitted to mention in his letter to Vichy. To supplement remainder stocks, the 20c Mercury was reprinted from 19 November to 12 December 1941, the 30c from 11 November 1941 to 6 March 1942 (Fig 7) and the 40c from 12 December 1941 to 28 May 1942 (with sheets from the last few days of printing being precancelled). Understandably, there was no first day of issue for these recalled Mercury printings as their status was only provisional and they were supplied to offices only when and if required. By the end of March 1942 though, all offices were selling only the reissue, the 30c and 40c *Type Prost* having at last been officially withdrawn from sale on 2 March and the 20c value on 14 March. In addition to the three values recalled to replace the *Type Prost*, a new

50c Mercury, similarly inscribed *République Française*, was added to the series to replace the 50c Pétain *Type Lemagny*. The 50c Mercury was printed between 21 January and 11 June 1942, of which there were several precancelled printings, and was issued on 7 February 1942.

It is surprising that Pétain did not complain that the provisional issue, with the inscription *République Française*, was not compliant with the ethos of the new Régime. However, the PTT, being very sensitive about this failing, soon set to preparing new dies to correct the situation and later in 1942 printing began of four Mercury values with the legend *Postes Françaises*. With new postal rates having been introduced earlier in the year, it was also an opportunity to modify the values accordingly. Whereas the 30c, 40c and 50c values were still required, the 20c was now redundant and was replaced by a 10c value.

The 10c Mercury *Postes Françaises* was printed from 22 June 1942 to 3 February 1945 and issued on 1 November 1942, the 40c was printed from 28 August 1942 to 8 December 1944 and issued on 15 December 1942, and the 50c was printed from 22 July 1942 to 9 January 1945 and issued on 6 August 1942.

Ironically, the 30c *Type Prost* which had been the first of the series to offend the Marshal was one of the last to be replaced by the 30c Mercury *Postes Françaises* (Fig 8). It was printed from 14 September 1942 to 29 January 1945 and issued on 15 December 1942 – more than a year after the despatch of Jean Berthelot's conciliatory letter to Vichy.

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My sincere thanks are due to Mme Marthe Bobik not only for providing access to documents and records in the *Musée de la Poste* library but also for her invaluable assistance in scanning and collating the material.

Vacillations of a Minister

André Métayer

Translated by Mick Bister



Monsieur Bérard. Under-Secretary of State for Posts and Telegraphs 1902-1906

From the creation of the postage stamp to the present day, the 15c basic letter rate of 1 May 1878 has been the longest. In fact, it lasted until 15 April 1906.

On 15 March 1896, the magazine '*L'Écho de la Timbrologie*' had already reported on a bill being tabled by a Paris député, Monsieur Michelin, calling upon the *Assemblée Nationale* to lower the basic 15 grams letter rate to 10 centimes. At the same time, he was proposing an additional tax to compensate the Post Office for its loss of revenue!! Needless to say, he had little chance of winning his case.

This attempt to lower the rate was neither the first nor the last, as such demands were regularly registered in the office of the *Chambre des Députés*. One has to admire the tenacity of France's successive ministers who resisted these demands despite the letter rate of the time being clearly much higher than in France's neighbouring countries.

Finally, the newspaper '*Le Matin*' ran a campaign over several months with the aim of achieving a reduction in

postal rates. The paper printed postcards showing in their respective colours the main postage stamps used in Europe with a face value equivalent to 10c except for Germany, Austria and Hungary whose stamps had a value of about 12c (Fig 1).

The reverse of the card (Fig 2) gave the recipient's address: '*A Monsieur le Président de la Chambre des Députés au Palais Bourbon Paris*' and in the correspondence section was the petition: '*PÉTITION Nous demandons que la taxe des lettres ne dépassant pas 15 grammes soit abaissée de 0fr 15 à 0fr 10*'.

The back of the card also reminded the sender that according to the Act of 25 Frimaire Year VIII, the French people were exempt from paying postage when writing to the President (edict dated 17 November 1844).

More than 100,000 of these cards were delivered to the *Chambre des Députés*. Many others though were kept by collectors.



Figure 1
Front of the 'Le Matin' campaign postcard

During a sitting on 7 March 1905 Maurice Rouvier, who was both Prime Minister and Finance Minister, made the following statement:

'I intend to ask the proposers of these amendments to agree that any questions concerning the rates structure be referred to the treasury committee with the understanding that immediately after the vote on the Budget, and before Easter at the latest, I will table a bill revising

the tax reforms including the reduction of the letter rate to 10 centimes.'

In expectation of this rate reduction (the date of which had not yet been finalised) the *Imprimerie des Timbres-Poste* in the Boulevard Brune in Paris began printing, in the 34th and 35th weeks of 1905, postal stationery comprising letter cards and envelopes featuring the familiar 10c *Semeuse lignée* or Lined Sower¹.

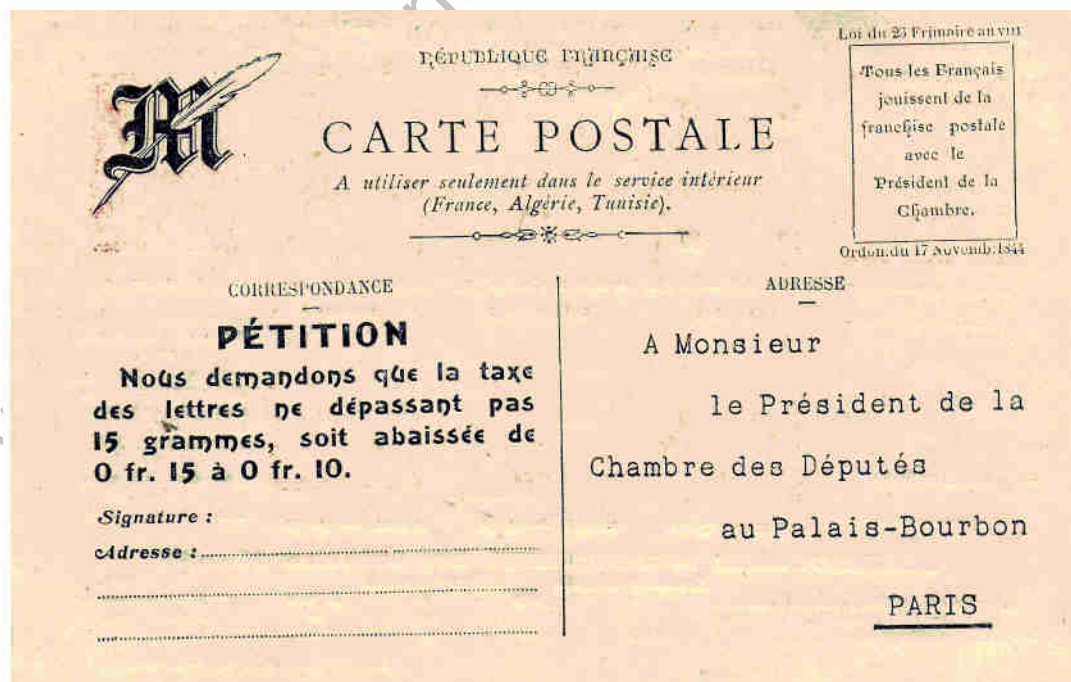


Figure 2
Reverse of the 'Le Matin' campaign card

¹ Originally issued in May 1903 to serve the Internal and Foreign post-card rates.

Eventually, the postal rate was set to change on 16 April 1906 and the first newspaper to announce the issue of a new stamp for it was 'Le Figaro':

"The current design of our stamps will therefore, by necessity, be modified and we shall see a new interpretation of Roty's Sower. This occasion offers the opportunity to perfect her appearance and to remove certain details which, although not creating problems for the experts, were none the less quite difficult for the general public to understand.

The current stamp was designed as a bas-relief, which gave the impression that the sun was shining from outside the design; the result was that the layman saw an artistic error only because of his difficulty in understanding the art form. Furthermore, the Sower was on a dull background and so did not appear distinct enough. We will not talk of the criticism that was levelled at her for sowing into the wind. It was not the wind but her walking motion that caused her hair to move and, besides, a sower sometimes sows into the wind and sometimes with the wind according to whether he is walking up or down the furrow.

Anyway, the new Sower (Fig 3) will no longer be open to the earlier criticisms and you will be able to appreciate, from the description that we are giving of it, the differences between the new and the old version.

As you can see, the Sower now stands out on a light background. She is walking on slightly hilly terrain and the sun, instead of shining on her from behind, is now rising above the horizon in front of her and highlighting her front and emphasising her movement.

The new design was authorised by Monsieur Georges Trouillot who was Minister for Posts and Telegraphs in Rouvier's cabinet before he left the ministry. It was the product of his collaboration with Messrs Bérard, Under-Secretary of State for Posts and Telegraphs and Dujardin-Beaumetz, Under-Secretary of State for the Arts, together with the maestro Roty and the engraver Mouchon. It was Monsieur Dujardin-Beaumetz himself, well known for his expertise, who drew a sketch that served as a model for the engraver to work from.

As we speak, the postal authorities are increasing their efforts to achieve, in the short time that is left before 16 April, the production and distribution of the new stamp which, as much by its inspiration as its execution, meets all the desired criteria for it to be proclaimed the most beautiful stamp in the world and for it to carry afar, on the corner of every letter, the established reputation for taste and art that our country has successfully maintained throughout the world"

However, the Under-Secretary of State for Posts and Telegraphs, Monsieur Bérard, while wanting a change of stamp was vacillating over his choice.

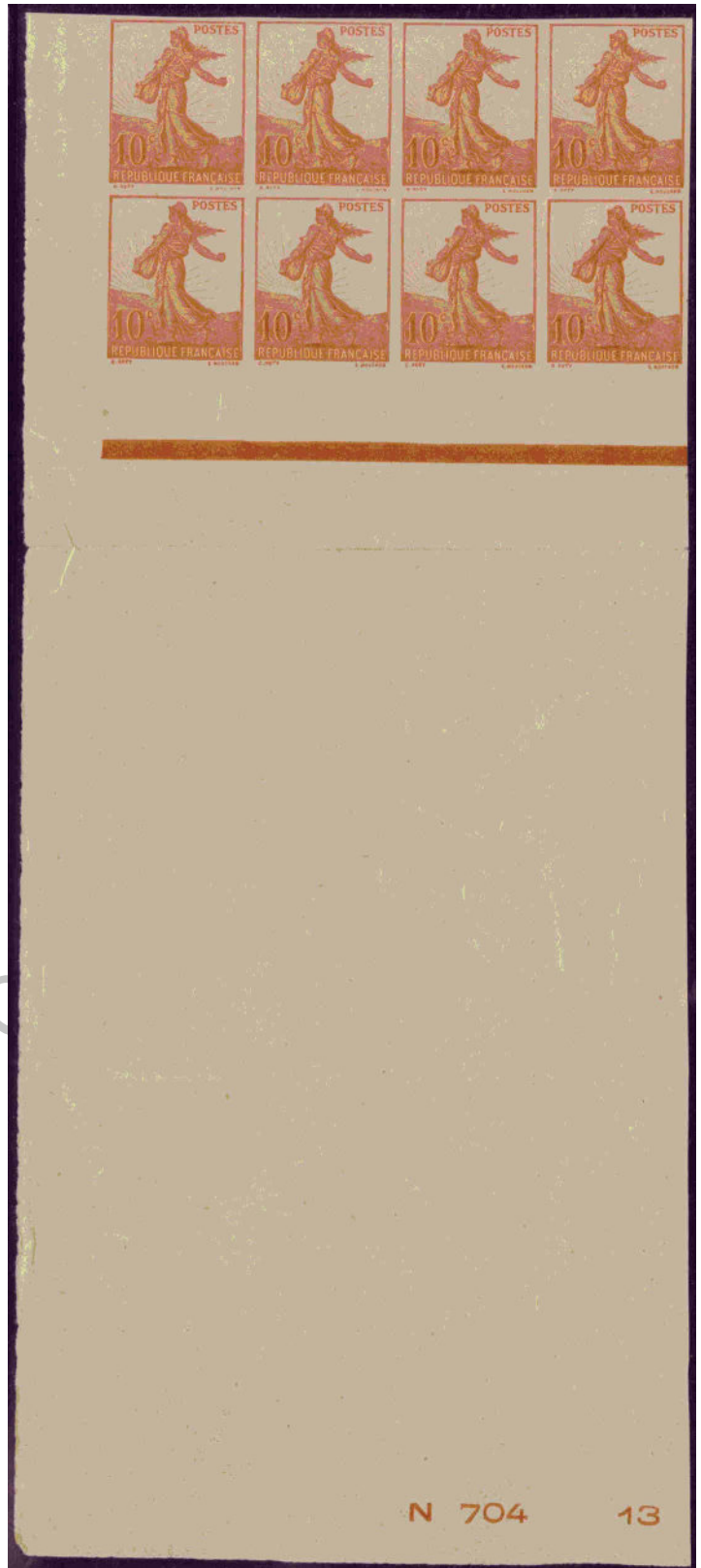


Figure 3
Trial printing of the rejected
Semeuse avec soleil devant dated 7 April 1906

In the end, it was not the *Semeuse avec soleil devant* but the *Semeuse avec terrasse* design (now known as the *Semeuse avec sol* or *Sower on Ground*) that was adopted and put on sale on 13 April 1906 in the offices of the *Chambre des Députés* and the *Sénat* (Fig 4). Three days later on 16 April, the basic letter rate was reduced from 15 centimes to 10 centimes (Fig 5).

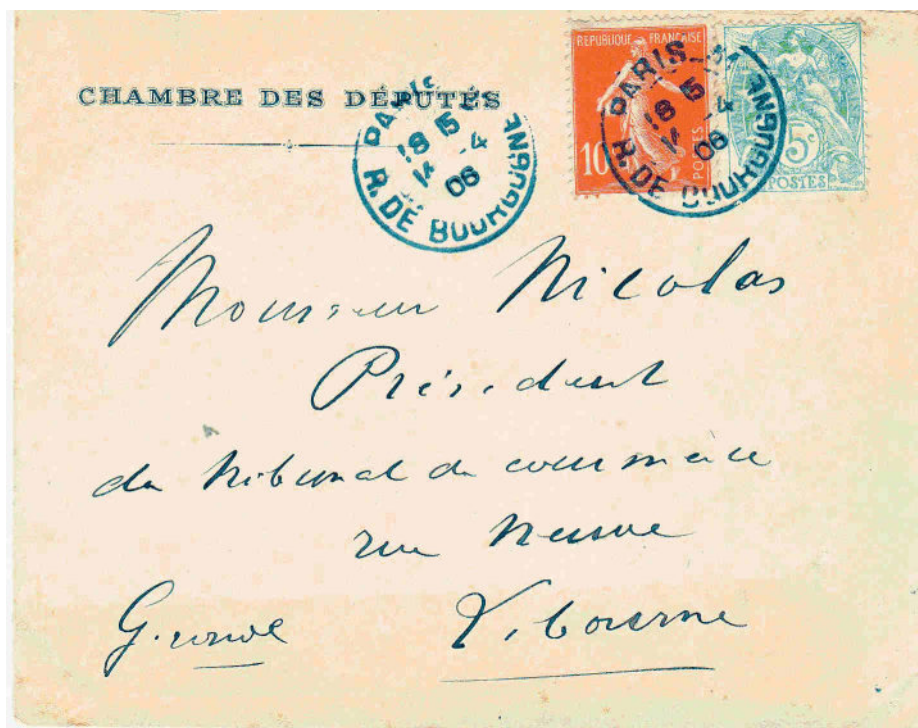


Figure 4
Letter from the *Chambre des Députés* dated 14 April 1906 (second day of issue)
franked at 15c with the new 10c *Semeuse avec sol*



Figure 5
Letter from Montmorency to Paris franked with the new 10c *Semeuse avec sol*
and cancelled on the first day of the reduced rate, 16 April 1906

But in Monsieur Bérard's mind and in that of the *Administration des Postes* this was only a provisional issue. What is more, with 13 April 1906 being so close there had been only enough time to make a single plate of 50 and in so doing the *millésime* had been omitted². Printing lasted

² Under normal circumstances a flat plate printed a sheet of 150 with the *millésime* appearing three times in the gutter margin.

from 10 to 25 April 1906. A second type of the 10c *Semeuse avec sol* was printed from 26 April 1906, this time with the *millésime* 6 (Fig 6).

Printing of the 10c *Semeuse avec sol* ceased on 11 July 1906 and printing of its successor, the 10c *Semeuse camée avec chiffres maigres* (Cameo Sower with thin figures) which proved to be short-lived too, began on 12 July 1906.

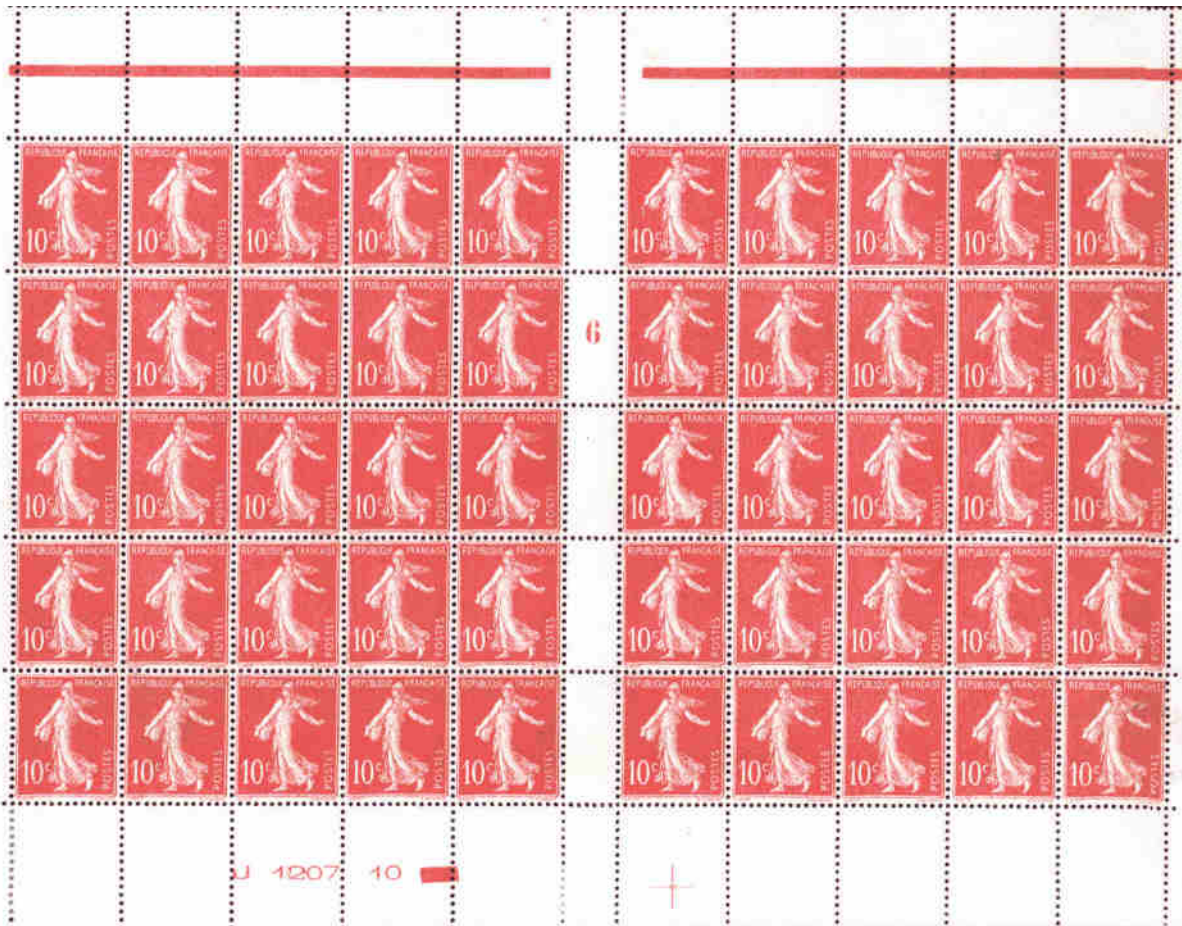


Figure 6 (above)

First day of printing of the 10c *Semeuse camée*
avec chiffres maigres on 12 July 1906
(reduced in size to fit the page)

Figure 7 (right)

Pane of 25 from late printing of
10c *Semeuse lignée* dated 27 November 1906



This new stamp, issued on 28 July 1906, did not meet Monsieur Bérard's approval either, and within two hours of being on sale the order was given to withdraw the stamp and incinerate all the remaining stocks. Fortunately for collectors, not all of them were destroyed.

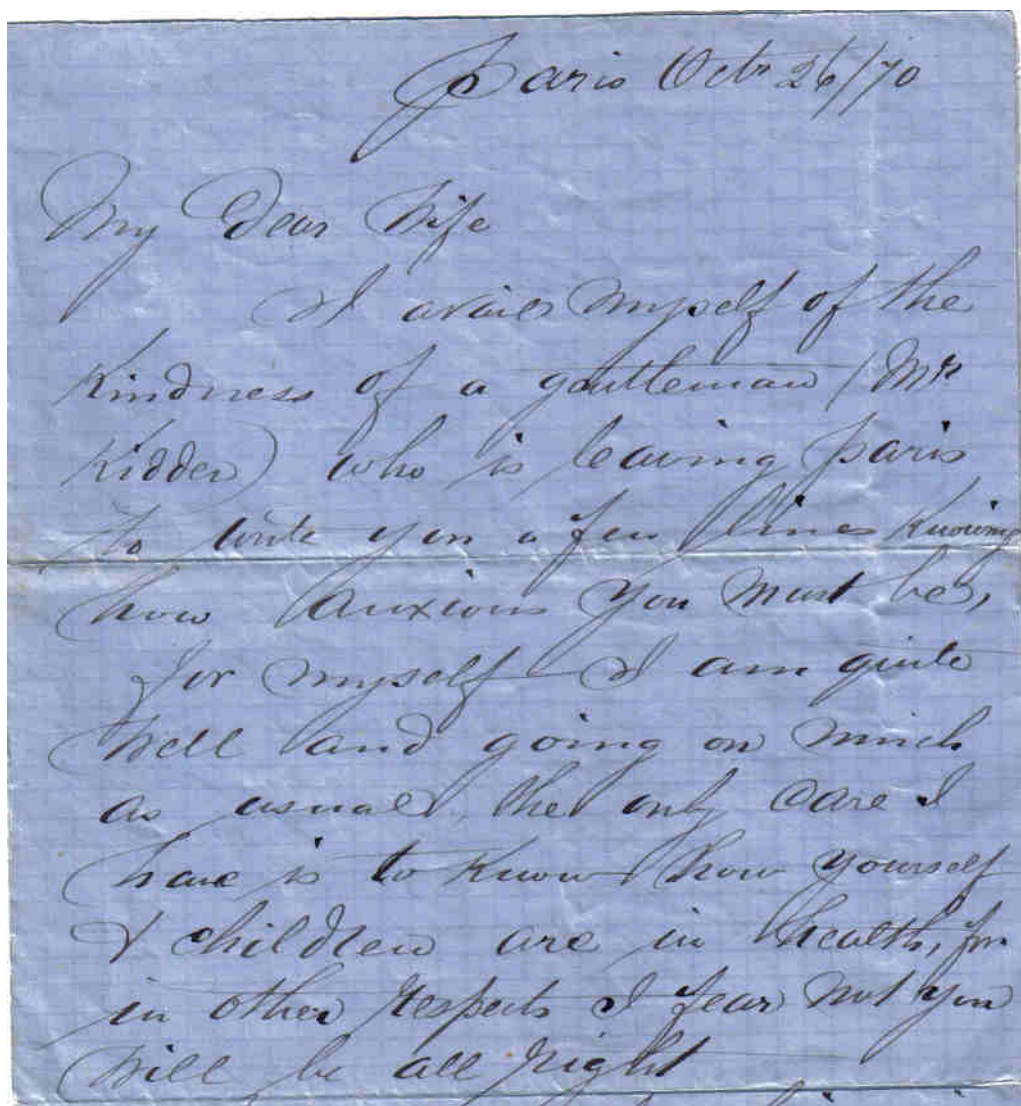
But the vacillations of the Under-Secretary of State continued! In October 1906 a Type II of the 10c *Semeuse camée* avec chiffres maigres appeared and then in December 1906 a Type III. At the same time, printing of the original 10c *Semeuse lignée* still carried on until the end of 1906 (Fig 7).

Finally, Monsieur Bérard finished in 1907 by accepting the definitive type of the 10c which he had been looking for for so long – the 10c *Semeuse camée* avec chiffres gras (Cameo Sower with thick figures). This stamp remained in use until December 1922.

All these vacillations and trials bring joy to us as collectors. *MERCI MONSIEUR BÉRARD !*

So Who Was Mr. Kidder?

Ashley Lawrence



Paris Oct 26/70

My Dear Wife

I avail myself of the kindness of a gentleman (Mr Kidder) who is leaving Paris to write you a few lines knowing how anxious you must be, for myself I am quite well and going on much as usual, the only care I have is to know how yourself & children are in health, for in other respects I fear not you will be all right

Figure 1

The commencement of the letter

Regular readers of this Journal may have seen earlier articles resulting from my research into the correspondence which passed between William James Brown and his wife Margaret Binfield Brown during the Siege of Paris of 1870-71¹. Besides being enjoyable for its own sake, such research can also lead to surprising results and unexpected friendships, as will appear below.

Mr. Brown ran a business called "The British Warehouse" in Paris during the Siege while his French partner M. Jourdain served with the National Guard. After the Prussian armies surrounded Paris on 19 September 1870, Mr. Brown attempted by all available means to send messages

to his wife who, together with their two young daughters, was sheltering with relatives in England. To this end he entrusted several messages to contacts at the British Embassy. Following the successful departure of the balloons "Le Neptune" and "La Ville de Florence", and the introduction of the world's first organised airmail service, he was able to send several letters to Mrs. Brown *Par Balloon Monté*.

For a long time I was puzzled by one of Mr. Brown's letters. Unlike the letters sent by balloon which had clearly identifiable postal markings, or the messages that stated that they had been delivered at the Embassy, this particular letter was something of a mystery.

The letter, written on his customary blue notepaper, and addressed to "My dear Wife", was headed "Paris Oct. 26 / 70". It commenced with these words :

¹ See "A Message brought to Paris by Pigeon Post in 1870-71" published in Journal 224 in June 2002, and "An American Kindness" published in Journal 230 in December 2003.

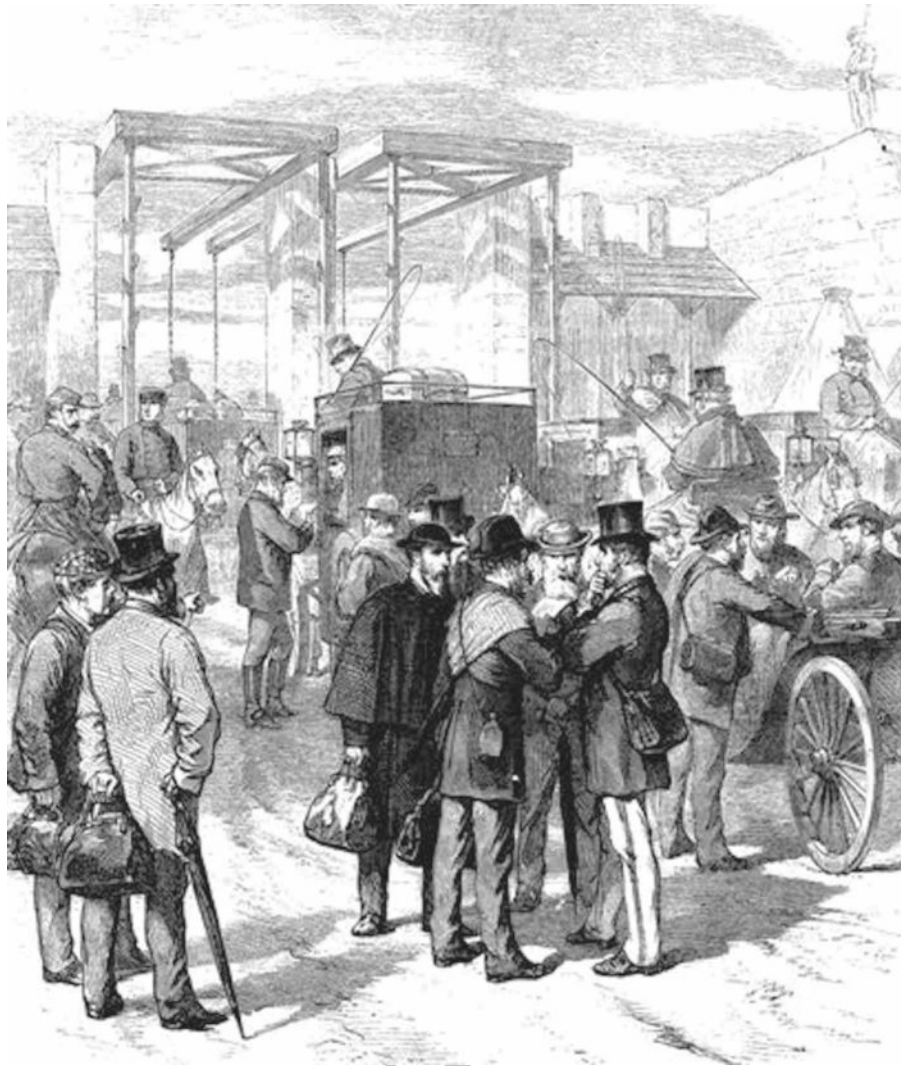


Figure 2
The Americans leaving Paris

"I avail myself of the kindness of a gentleman (Mr. Kidder) who is leaving Paris, to write you a few lines knowing how anxious you must be."

So who was Mr. Kidder? How was he able to leave Paris when all her inhabitants were besieged by German armies, and encircled by a ring of fire and steel?

The date of the letter, 26 October, gave the first clue.

In his *"Recollections of a Minister to France"*, US Minister E B Washburne recounted that he had held meetings with the Governor of Paris General Trochu, and with Jules Favre, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and had corresponded with the Prussian Chancellor Count Bismarck. It had been agreed by all parties that foreign nationals who were issued with an appropriate *Laissez-passer* by the American Legation would be permitted to pass through the French and German lines on 27 October.

Minister Washburne described what happened:

"It was a large cavalcade; a line was formed which passed out of the city under military escort, and which proceeded to the Porte de Creteil. I sent an attaché of the legation to accompany this cavalcade, who made a full report to me of the proceedings and of the parties who went out at this time. There were forty-eight Americans, men, women and children, and nineteen

carriages, and also a Russian convoy of seven carriages and twenty-one persons, having my passes. The passes were all closely examined before the persons holding them could pass the French lines."

The illustration above shows a sketch of the departure of the American residents that was sent from Paris by balloon post, and was published in *"The Graphic"* on 19 November 1870.

Elihu Benjamin Washburne, the senior Minister at the American Legation, was a brave diplomat, the only official representative of a foreign government to remain in Paris throughout the Siege. The British Ambassador Lord Lyons and most other members of the *Corps Diplomatique* had fled to Tours early in September, following Emperor Napoleon's defeat and capitulation at Sedan. Washburne agreed to represent and protect the interests of those German nationals and other foreigners who, for whatever reason, were obliged to remain in Paris, and he gained Chancellor Bismarck's gratitude for this service. The USA had also earned French goodwill by being the first foreign power to recognise the French Republic, just three days after its declaration on 4 September 1870.

I traced the Washburne papers to the National Archives and Records Administration in Maryland. The Archivist kindly sent me copies of the List of Americans who left

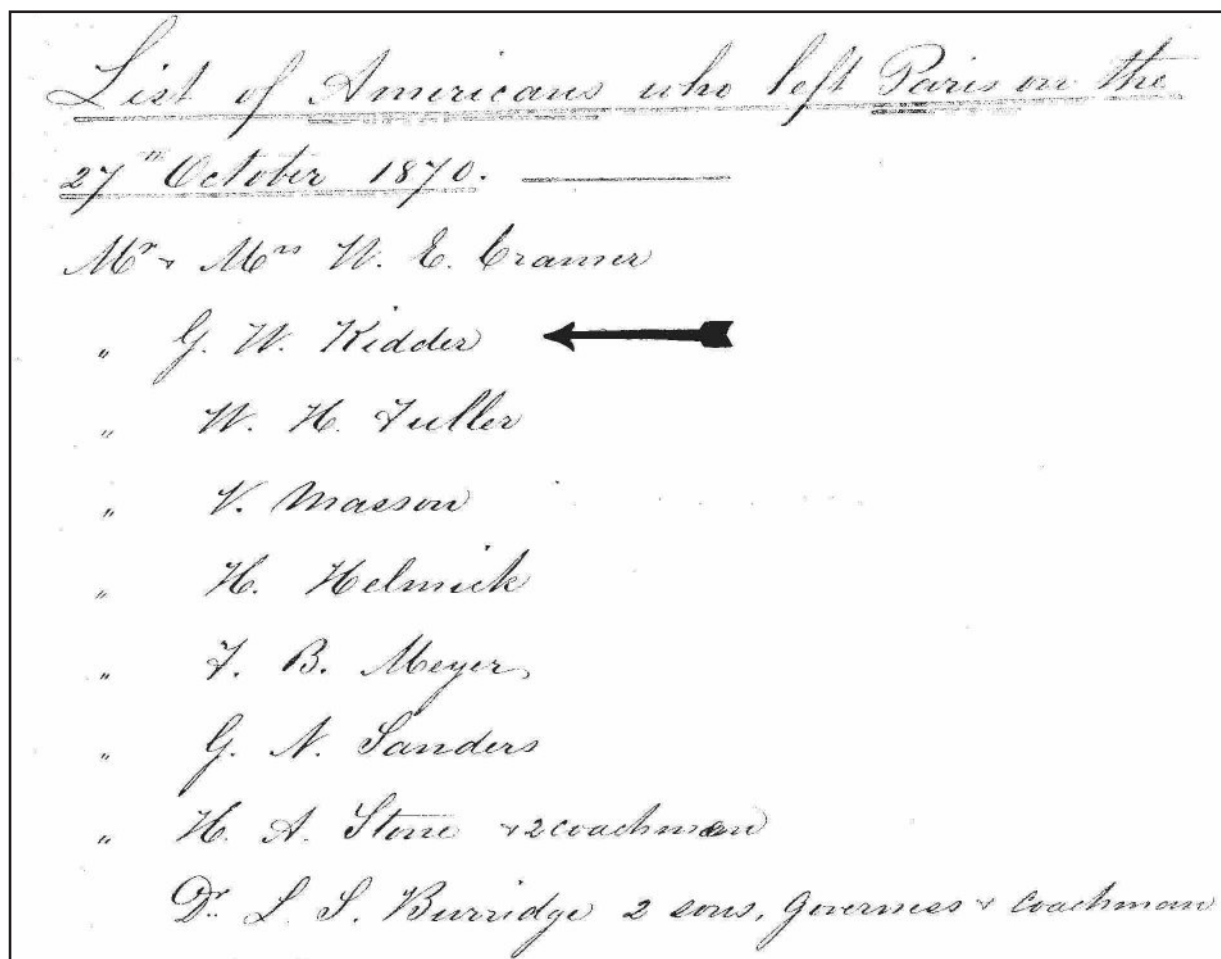


Figure 3
The list of Americans who left Paris on 27 October 1870

Paris on 27 October 1870, together with the Report that was delivered to Minister Washburne by the official who accompanied the convoy. The list is headed *Légation des États-Unis d'Amérique à Paris*, and an extract from the list is illustrated above. Mr. G W Kidder was one of 48 Americans who were permitted to leave Paris on 27 October, and his is the second name to appear on the List. His full name was George Wilson Kidder, and he was the kind gentleman to whom William Brown had entrusted his letter.

Thanks to the Internet, I succeeded in making contact with the present-day George Kidder who is an authority on the family's history in the USA: this dates from the arrival of James Kidder in America in 1648! George was able to provide further details about his ancestor, George Wilson Kidder, William Brown's benefactor.

George Wilson Kidder was born in Wilmington, North Carolina in 1842, the second son of Edward Kidder who became wealthy as the owner of a lumber manufacturing business. He briefly served as a Second Lieutenant in the Confederate Army in 1862-63. The short service may have been due to sickness or injury, or to family pressure: his father was devoted to the Unionist cause. The South's record keeping was poor, and most of the records were destroyed. Apparently it was not unusual for family members to serve on different sides in the American Civil War.

The records do not show why George Wilson Kidder was in France in 1870. It is unlikely that he was associated with

the US Legation in any military capacity, as he had not attended a military academy or achieved high rank. He was more likely to have been in Paris as a businessman, with a background of education and wealth.

I should add that William Brown's business "The British Warehouse" was in the prosperous centre of Paris, at 14, rue Halévy, close to the Opéra Garnier and the Grand Hôtel. Close by, at 11 rue Scribe, was an establishment with a similar name, "The American Warehouse" (today it is the American Express office), so it is not surprising that the two businessmen should have become acquainted.

It was reassuring to come across a corroborative reference to Mr. Kidder. According to research carried out by the late Ernst Cohn, George Wilson Kidder had sent a card to a relative in New York, E H Kidder, aboard the balloon "Céleste" on 29 September 1870, a month before he left Paris². The message written on the card was reported in the *Baltimore Sun* of Friday morning, 7 October, citing news from London of 6 October, and read as follows:-

"The Balloon Mail: The following was received par Ballon this morning from Paris, dated the 29th ultimo, and addressed on an open card: 'E. H. Kidder, Maiden Lane, New York, by his son George - Tell my family I am in no danger. There are plenty of provisions here.

² "New Studies of the Transport of Mails in Wartime France" by Ernst M Cohn at pages 40-41.

The terrible stories manufactured by Bismarck regarding internal dissension here are utterly false. The troops are in excellent condition."

I have obtained a copy of the *Baltimore Sun*, and established that Edward Hartwell (E H) Kidder was in fact George Wilson's elder brother, not his father, as reported in the newspaper. The New York Directory of 1869 gives his address as 139 Maiden Lane, Manhattan, New York.

I believe that after he left Paris, Mr. Kidder travelled to England and spent some time in this country. According to the New York Passenger Lists of 1820-1957, George W Kidder, an American citizen aged 29, sailed from Liverpool aboard the vessel "*Java*", travelled by way of Queenstown in Ireland and arrived in New York on 14 December 1871. The family history relates that he resided in Wilmington, NC, and was a member of the firm of Edward Kidder & Sons, commission merchants. He married Florence Hill of North Carolina in 1877 and the following year, while travelling abroad, he visited England, and researched the Kidder family ancestry in Maresfield and East Grinstead. Mr. Kidder died in 1915, survived by four children.

It would be nice to think that while in Liverpool, Mr. Kidder delivered William Brown's letter personally to Mrs. Brown, care of her brother Captain Henry Newman. This might explain why William Brown's next letter from Paris, dated 8 November 1870, was addressed to Mrs. Brown in Liverpool rather than, as previously, care of a friend Mr. Burroughs in Kentish Town. However, this is speculation on my part.

What is certain is that Mrs. Brown acknowledged receipt of the "few lines" from her husband in her letter of 16 November 1870. Her letter commences "*Yours of the 26th to hand*". However, Mrs. Brown does not mention Mr. Kidder, and there is no further reference to him in any of the later correspondence.

It is interesting to compare the Americans' departure from Paris with the English experience. A party of British subjects had also expected to leave Paris on 27 October. To their chagrin, when they reached the outposts and the

German lines, they were turned back on the grounds that their permits had not yet received clearance from the Prussian Headquarters at Versailles! Their predicament was amusingly described by "the Besieged Resident", Henry Labouchere:

"At an early hour yesterday morning, about 100 English congregated at the gate of Charenton en route for London. There were with them about 60 Americans, and 20 Russians, who also were going to leave us. Imagine the indignation of these "Cives Romani" when they were informed that, while the Russians and the Americans would be allowed to pass the Prussian outposts, owing to the list of the English wishing to go not having reached Count Bismarck in time, they would have to put off their journey to another day. The guard had literally to be turned out to prevent them from endeavouring to force their way through the whole German army.

I spoke this morning to an English butler who had made one of the party. This worthy man evidently was of opinion that the end of the world is near at hand, when a butler, and a most respectable person, is treated in this manner. 'Pray, sir, may I ask,' he said, with bitter scorn, 'whether Her Majesty is still on the throne in England?' I replied, 'I believed that she was.' 'Then,' he went on, 'has this Count Bismarck, as they call him, driven the British nobles out of the House of Lords? Nothing which this feller does would surprise me now.' Butler, Chargé d'Affaires, and the other Cives are, I understand, to make another start, as soon as the "feller" condescends to answer a letter which has been forwarded to him, asking him to fix a day for their departure."

Fortunately, the indignant British subjects were permitted to leave a fortnight later, on 8 November, accompanied by a junior representative from the British Embassy.

Unlike his compatriots, William Brown remained in Paris and endured the hardships and privations of the Siege. My research continues, and I hope to recount more about his adventures in later articles.

SOCIETY NOTES

Continued from page 82

Northern Group Programme

19 Sept 2009 -	Steve Ellis: Red Cross
14 Nov 2009 -	Members' Choice
13 Feb 2010 -	Tony Shepherd: French Guyana
2 March 2010 -	Visit to Leeds P S (7.00pm)
10 April 2010 -	Members' Choice
10 July 2010 -	"Bastille Day" (at Heaton Royds, 10.00am)
25 Sept 2010 -	North-West Meeting (at Adlington)
13 Nov 2010 -	Members' Choice

Meetings are normally held in the Board Room, Leeds General Infirmary, Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3EX at 1.00pm.

* * *

F&CPS Journals

Our member Alan Littell informs us that he has a complete run of the Journal from 1966 to the present day which he intends to get rid of as they are taking up valuable storage space.

He says he would happily give them free of charge to any member of the Society who would like to acquire them. Any interested party is welcome to contact him by telephone or email:

020 8699 4586

or

alan.littell@btinternet.com

* * *

Martinique: The 'Ordonnance' (Order) of 24 April - 14 May 1835

Guy Dutau

Translated by Peter Kelly



Figure 1a

Front of letter from St Pierre (1 February 1849) paid in accordance with the Order of 24 April 1835 but two months after the postal reform of 1 January 1849!. Taxed 28 décimes on arrival in France.

Introduction

Two letters from Martinique to France provide an opportunity to illustrate and comment on the Order of 24 April 1835 that completes the legislative arrangements governing the letter rate to and from soldiers and sailors employed in the colonies. It includes all military ranks, including officers, stationed in the colonies under the flag or on leave for whom the address is either that of the corps or a private one (1.2). This definition of military personnel employed in the colonies is therefore much wider than the terms of the military tariff of 1806. The Order of 24 April 1835 provides the military with the opportunity of franking their letters for metropolitan France at the rate of 60c for a first weight step letter of less than 7.5 grams (50c postage plus 1 décime – 10 centimes – maritime surcharge) and equally their families who can send letters to them in the colonies unpaid and taxable at the same rate.

It should be borne in mind that unpaid letters from the colonies were taxed upon arrival in France at 1 décime (10c) maritime surcharge plus the taxation calculated on the section of the journey from the port of arrival to the final destination in accordance with the tariff of 1 January 1828 (Law of 15 March 1827).

It should also be remembered that, firstly, the Order of 14 May 1835 did not replace the legislation in place relating

to military correspondence¹ and, secondly, that in order to benefit from this reduced rate letters had to be carried by French merchant vessels or by ships of the French navy.

Michèle Chauvet has shown that the Postal Administration did not send out any Circulars concerning the application of the Order of 1835 to the postmasters of the French offices but that because of the volume of claims against abusive taxation on the receipt of letters, the Administration did send out a Circular on 16 March 1840 which was not very explicit². It was not until March 1847³ that the application was explained precisely. The postal reform of 1849 did away with this reduced tariff and the uncertainty that surrounded it.

1 Letters sent by soldiers and NCOs in service could be sent at the reduced rate of 25c (Decree of 9 February 1810) and those from the armed services to the armed services could be sent unpaid or paid at the internal French rate (Law of 27 June 1792).

2 Circular N° 143 of 16 March 1840 specifically mentioned 'these offices acted in this way only out of ignorance of the Order quoted above (24 April - 14 May 1835)'.

3 Circular N° 320 of 12 March 1847. 'I invite postmasters to circulate and distribute, tax free, letters with the originating stamp of one of our colonies and marked either with the "P.P." or "Port Payé" stamp in full or any other handstamp whose object is to show that postage has been paid in the colony concerned.'



Figure 1b

On the back of the letter shown opposite appears in manuscript:
*'Affranchissement jusqu'à destination conformément à l'ordonnance du 24 Avril 1835.
 Le Directeur de la Poste, Achille Lemerle'.*

Two letters from Martinique to France written by military personnel to their families illustrate this little known rate⁴.

Letter N° 1 (Figs 1a and 1b)

This is a letter of 1 February 1849 from a soldier at St Pierre franked in accordance with the Order of 1835 as is shown on the reverse by the manuscript instruction applied by the postmaster: *Affranchissement jusqu'à destination conformément à l'ordonnance du 24 Avril 1835. Le Directeur de la Poste, Achille Lemerle*. Nevertheless this letter was taxed upon its arrival in France because, since 1 January 1849, the 1835 Order was no longer in force⁵. But even if it had been it should not have been allowed to benefit from the preferential rate because it had been carried by an English vessel instead of a French one. Finally, the letter was taxed 28 décimes comprising 10 décimes (weight up to ½ ounce – 1843 Convention) plus 18 décimes for the section of the journey from Boulogne to Brest (500/600km as per the rate of 1828) for a weight of 10-15 grams.

Letter N° 2 (Figs 2a and 2b)

This letter was sent by a sergeant of the 4th Company at Port Royal on 11 March 1847. It is marked with a boxed 'PP' in blue and, handwritten on the back '*Affranchie jusqu'à destination en vertu de l'ordonnance royale du 24 Avril 1835*' (paid to destination by virtue of the royal order of 24 April 1835). The handwritten cross covering the front shows that

postage had been paid at the receiving office. The date stamp '*Outre Mer / Le Havre*' struck in red on 20 April 1847 confirms that the letter has been carried by a French vessel. In this case the regulations provided for in the Order of 1835 have been respected and the letter was received at Brest on 21 April.

Comments

Maurice Jamet and Michèle Chauvet are sure that this little known military rate results from the Royal Order of 24 April 1835.

« Le Roi, désirant que les militaires et marins puissent recevoir leurs lettres non affranchies, et qu'ils aient la possibilité d'affranchir celles qu'ils adressent en France (afin de décharger leurs familles des frais de port et leur permettre de recevoir plus de courrier) décrète :

Article 1. : Les lettres qui seront adressées aux militaires et marins pourront être expédiées sans avoir été affranchies. La taxe sera perçue dans les colonies à raison de 50 centimes par lettre au-dessous de 7,5 grammes, plus 1 décime de mer.

Article 2. : Les lettres que les militaires et marins voudront envoyer en France et en payer le port seront taxées à 50 centimes au-dessous de 7,5 grammes, plus 1 décime de mer ».

(Translation) 'The King, desiring that soldiers and sailors can receive their letters unpaid and that they may frank those that they wish to send to France (in order to relieve their families of the need to pay postage and therefore to receive more mail) decrees:

Article 1: Letters that are addressed to soldiers and sailors can be sent without prepayment. The tax will

⁴ This tariff is mentioned and commented on by Maurice Jamet on pages 42-3 of his work *150 ans d'Histoire Postale des Anciennes Colonies Françaises des origines à 1860*, Imprimerie Financière, Paris 1980.

⁵ It is quite likely that in February 1849 the postmaster at St Pierre had not received notice that the postal rate relating to the Order of 1835 had been withdrawn.



Figure 2a
Front of letter from Fort Royal (11 March 1847) to Brest (21 April);
carried by French ship, entered France at Le Havre ('OUTRE MER / LE HAVRE') Marked 'P.P.' in blue.
(Courtesy of Brian Brookes)



Figure 2b
On the back of the letter, in manuscript:
'Affranchie jusqu'à destination en vertu de l'ordonnance royale du 24 April 1835'
(Courtesy of Brian Brookes)

be claimed in the colonies on the basis of 50c per letter weighing less than 7.5 grams plus 1 décime (10 centimes) maritime surcharge.

Article 2: Letters which soldiers and sailors wish to send to France fully paid are to be franked 50c (for a letter of less than 7.5 grams) plus 1 décime maritime surcharge.

Michèle Chauvet (Ref 1) mentions that the few letters known originating from Guadeloupe and Guyana, franked in accordance with the Order of 1835, were taxed in France although they were franked correctly. The two letters shown above are witness to the fact that the order of 1835 was known and applied in Martinique although Maurice Jamet (Ref 3) states that 'letters to soldiers and sailors will be without charge to them'. In fact, the postmaster at Port Royal indicated on the letter the application of the 1835

Order and his counterpart at St Pierre even continued to apply the rate after it was withdrawn on 1 January 1849.

In Guadeloupe the Order of 24 April took effect from 6 August. As mentioned by Maurice Jamet (Ref 3) this was applied scrupulously, as is shown by the manuscript remarks as well as the special handmade local 'Port Payé' handstamp. To support this we show a letter from Basse Terre, Guadeloupe on 5 March 1843 to Paris that was prepaid 6 décimes (60 centimes), comprising 50c postage plus 1 décime maritime surcharge (Figs 3a and 3b). Because of a change of address 'Parti à Acy près Soisson' and the location of the destination, 1 décime was charged for the rural post.

This letter is remarkable for the manuscript mark on it 'Port Payé Ord^{re} R^{ég} du 24 Avril 1835' in association with the boxed handstamp of Basse-Terre not recorded by Jamet (Ref 3): 'PORT PAYÉ / B^{ASSE} T^{ERRE} / GUADELOUPE' (Fig 4).



Figure 3a

Front of letter from Basse Terre (5 March 1843) to Paris and redirected to Acy near Soissons:
manuscript 'Port Payé Ord^{re} R^o du 24 Avril 1835'
in association with the boxed handstamp 'PORT PAYÉ / B^{ASSE} T^{ERRE} / GUADELOUPE'
(Courtesy of Anthony Shepherd)



Figure 3b

On the back the postal employee has indicated 'parti à Acy près Soisson'
justifying the *décime rurale* charged for rural delivery
(Courtesy of Anthony Shepherd)

Conclusion

Letters having their origin in the colonies and mentioning the Order of 24 April 1835 are very scarce and, to our knowledge, fewer than 12 are recorded. In order to benefit from this reduced rate of 60c they had to be franked and had to be carried by a French vessel. Despite the good intentions (even Royal ones!!) to simplify the exchange of correspondence between soldiers and sailors and their (modest) families, the Post, as is underlined by Michèle Chauvet (Ref 1), seems to have done what it could to keep the tariff confidential and/or not to have applied it.

Thanks

The author wishes to thank Michèle Chauvet who read the manuscript and to Brian Brookes (Letter N° 2) and Anthony Shepherd (Letter N° 3) who kindly provided these pieces from their collections and to Peter Kelly who translated the article.

References

1. Chauvet, M – *Introduction à l'histoire postale des origines à 1849 (Tome 1) et Tome 2 - Les tarifs postaux*, Brun & Fils, Paris 2002, pages 116-7
2. Chauvet, M – *Les Colonies Françaises (1848-1878): Les Colonies d'Amérique*, Brun & Fils, Paris 2008, page 152
3. Jamet, M – *150 ans d'Histoire postale des anciennes colonies françaises des origines à 1860*, Imprimerie Financière, Paris 1980, pages 42-3

Endnote

A comment from our Secretary, Peter Kelly:

"It has been a great pleasure to have brought together three members of our Society, each owning one of these scarce letters and a fourth, Mme Chauvet who has kindly read the text. This is a splendid example of members of our Society working together."

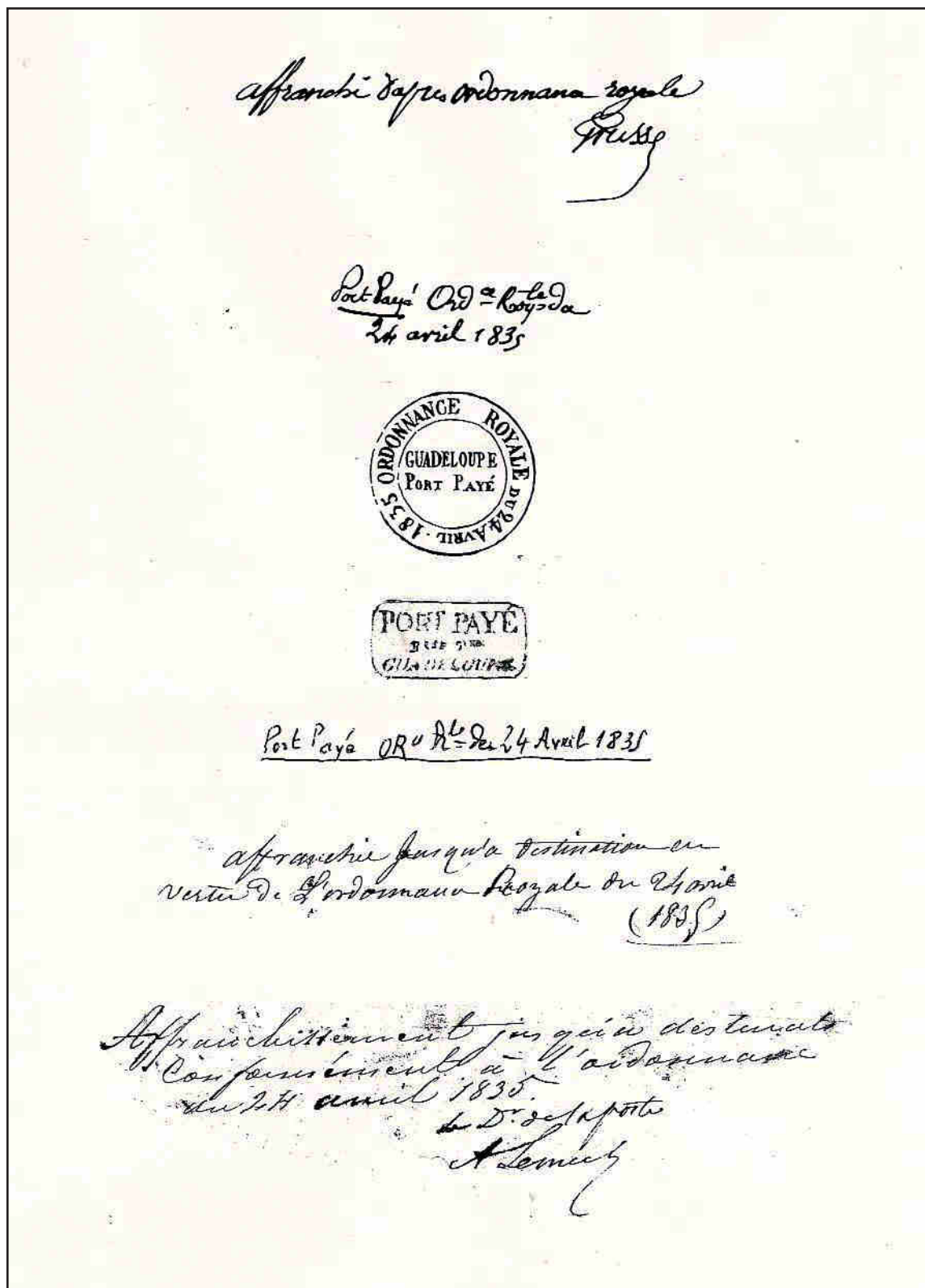


Figure 4

Manuscript markings and handstamps actually recorded to the best of our knowledge
(based on Maurice Jamet and modified).

The first five manuscript markings or handstamps have been taken from letters from Guadeloupe,
the last two from letters originating from Martinique.

November 2009 Auction - Selected Lots

Members should note that these illustrations together with a further selection of lots are now available for viewing on our website www.fcps.org.uk



Lot 1
1848
Président de la
Commission des
Prisons Politiques



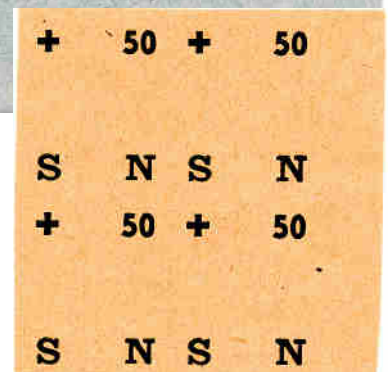
Lot 115
1944 Cameroun
censored mail to USA



Ex-Lot 171
Napoléon Lauré collection



Lot 253
1923 Congrès Philatélique de Bordeaux



Lot 125
1942 Secours National overprint proof

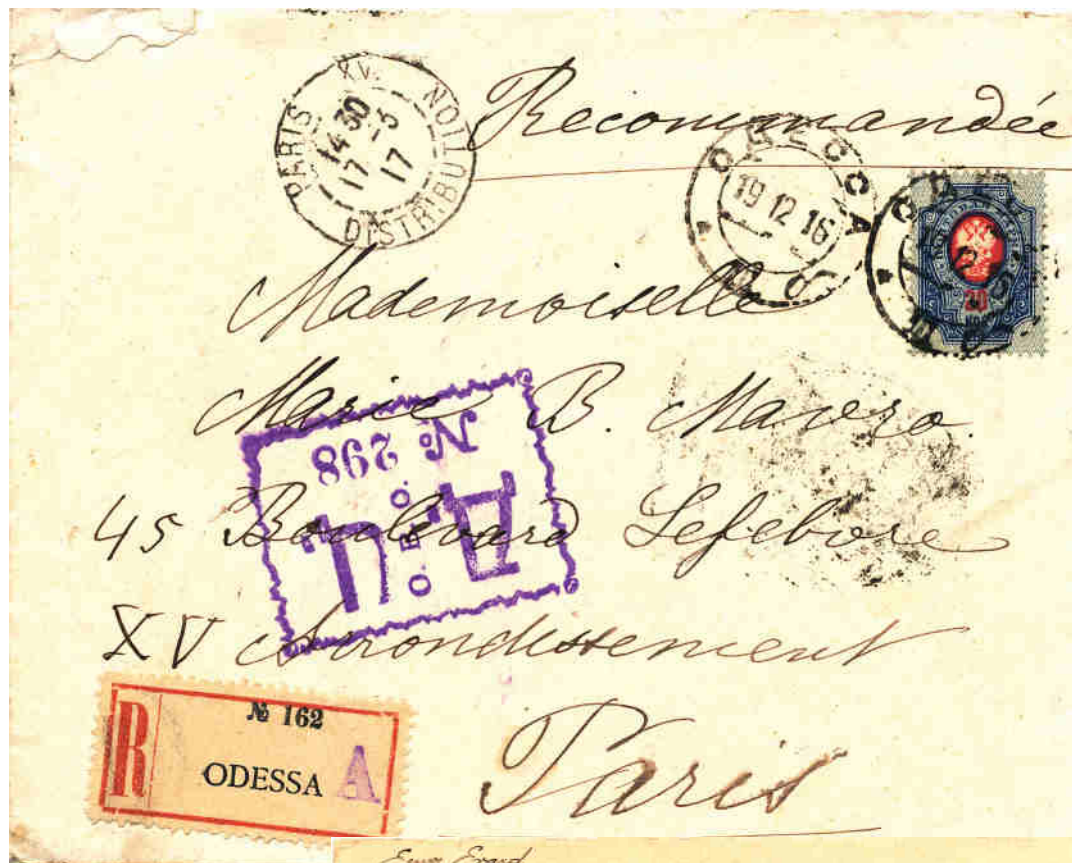


Lot 308
3c Blanc precancelled millésime pair



Lot 319
1927 Marseille Poste Aérienne

See also the next page and the back cover.



Lot 15
1916 Revolutionary
cover from Odessa



Lot 225
Le Petit Journal
Military card



Lot 320
Plane over Paris
full set

Continued on back cover

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF 9 MAY 2009

The General Secretary, Mr P R A Kelly, opened the meeting held at the Calthorpe Arms public house, 252 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1, at 11.30am in the presence of 23 members.

(1) Members present: Maurice Alder, Len Barnes, Mick Bister, Colin Clarkson, Christopher Cowling, Michael Ensor, L Roy Gilbert, Peter Grech, John Hammonds, Chris Hitchen, Peter Kelly, Mike Kemp, Ashley Lawrence, Hugh Loudon, R A Merson, J W Morton, C Nicolet, John Parmenter, David Pashby, Derek Richardson, Maurice Tyler, Alan Wood, Bob Wood. **Visitor:** Angela Cowling.

Apologies for absence: George Barker, Hamish Clifton, Steve Ellis, Geoff Gethin, Prue Henderson, David Jennings-Bramley, Peter Maybury, Ian McQueen, Bill Mitchell, John Parmenter, Mavis Pavey, Maurice Porter, Barbara Priddy, Michael Round, Colin Spong, John Thorpe, John West.

(2) Minutes of the previous AGM of 10 May 2008, published in Journal 249, were accepted *nem con* as a true record of that meeting. This was proposed by Ashley Lawrence and seconded by Mick Bister.

(3) President's Report - Ashley Lawrence

"Thank you for coming.

It's hard to believe that 12 months have passed since our last AGM. I just want to make a few personal remarks, before the Secretaries and others give their detailed reports.

I want to thank Geoff and Liz Gethin for dealing so efficiently with membership enquiries, and Derek Richardson for maintaining accurate membership records. The Society's membership is holding up reasonably well. We now have around 400 members worldwide. In spite of some recent losses, we do seem to be attracting new members, and it is encouraging that these include a number of foreign members.

However, if our Society is to remain vibrant we do need to attract younger members. We need to take every opportunity to publicise the activities of the Society, and to show how philately in all its aspects – the collecting of stamps and the study of postal history, the research and the writing up of material – is a fascinating hobby and rewarding in terms of its educational value. The Society's website can be a valuable asset in this connection. Our participation in such events as Swinpex at Swindon on 13 June and at Midpex in Coventry on 11 July can also play an important role in encouraging new membership.

The superb quality of our Journal, and of the books that we publish, all contribute to the international reputation of the Society, and play their part in attracting new members. Congratulations are due to our editor Maurice Tyler and to our authors for their success during the past year. Thanks to all of you who have contributed articles for the Journal. Thanks also to Maurice and Derek for ensuring the efficient and speedy distribution of the Journal.

The Society has held regular meetings in London, in the

north, south and west of England, and in Scotland. These meetings have been well attended, and as the reports in the Journal testify, the range and quality of the material displayed has been outstanding. I want to thank the convenors of these meetings, Len Barnes, Peter Maybury, Colin Spong, Peter Kelly and Alan Woods, and Mavis Pavey for all their hard work and enthusiasm. Thanks also to those many members who have displayed choice material from their collections, and given us such entertainment and instruction at the meetings.

For many years now, our annual weekend at Charlecote has been the highlight of the Society's year. In March we had an outstanding attendance. All those who came enjoyed excellent displays, enhanced by good food, wine and bonhomie.

Special thanks are due to Peter Kelly and to Chris Hitchen for organising the Charlecote weekend, for providing a superb and varied programme of events, and for ensuring that the arrangements ran so smoothly. No-one could have done it better.

I also want to give particular thanks to Marian Bister, Annette Tyler and Jean Hammonds who manned the book-stall, and to all those who displayed material, who regaled and amused us with their commentary, and whose participation helped to make the weekend such an outstanding success. Sadly, our good friend Skanda wasn't well enough to come and entertain us with one of his memorable displays this time: Peter is in touch with Skanda and has sent him all our best wishes.

I'd also like to take this opportunity of congratulating Peter for arranging the recent display by members of the European Academy of Philately at the Royal Philatelic Society in London. The display was entitled "The Stamps and Postal History of European Countries and Overseas Territories". Peter and Chris, George Barker, Mick Bister, Peter Maybury and John Yeomans were among the members of our Society who showed material at the Royal. This was acclaimed as a marvellous occasion and a great success. Chris is also this year's President of the Society of Postal Historians, and we can all be proud of such achievements by our members.

F&CPS members have also gained a number of significant awards, both for services to philately and for their successful displays at exhibitions in this country and abroad. Among many others noted in the Journal, I congratulate Robert Johnson for his award of the ABPS Congress Medal; Stan Luft for the American Philatelic Society Luff Award for distinguished philatelic research; Lesley Marley for her splendid thematic displays in Washington DC and in Vienna; and Robert Abensur on his appointment as Chevalier in the prestigious Order of Arts & Letters. And two of our members, George Barker and John Sussex, are among the four who this year will be appointed as signatories to the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists – an astonishing achievement !

As you'll hear from Chris, our finances are on a sound footing. My thanks are also given to Bob Wood and John West who run the France and Colonies' packets, to Mick Bister and John Hammonds for the successful running of the Society's auctions, to Peter Maybury and to George Barker for all their hard work in dealing with the book sales and the library, and to David Pahby for the circulation of the magazines. Well done to you all !

Finally, but significantly, I want to thank all the Officers and Members of the Committee for all their help, advice and support during my Presidency. I greatly appreciate the dedication, the experience and commitment which they bring to the Society, and I know they will give the same support to my successor.

This Society was established in 1949, the centenary of the first French postage stamp. This year marks its Diamond Jubilee, and we will be celebrating this with a special issue of the Journal. The France & Colonies Philatelic Society has an impressive history, and a proud record of achievement, and we can all look forward with confidence to the coming year. It had been a privilege to have served this Society as President during the past two years. I wish my successor *Bonne Chance*. Thank you."

(4) Membership Secretary's Report - Geoff Gethin

"At the start of 2008 the Society had 389 members. During the course of the year we gained 23 members and lost 21. At the end of the year there were 391 members. I would like to thank Derek Richardson for producing the annual updated list of members and my wife Elizabeth for typing the periodical membership updates."

General Secretary's Report - Peter Kelly

"Despite the economic woes that currently beset the world, philately has managed, generally, to keep its head up and perhaps it represents, more than ever, a refuge in which we can escape some of the worldwide problems and concerns that fuel the daily banner headlines of the press. It is also true to say that philately, wisely financed, has held its value remarkably well.

Against this backdrop our Society continues to maintain its position as one of the most successful specialist societies. I am pleased to report that we have had another successful year which can be measured not only by a strong financial position as can be seen from our accounts but also from the support shown at our London and regional meetings as evidenced by the regular meeting reports published in the Journal. Our membership numbers remain solid and, in fact, show a small increase, but we continue to bring our activities to the attention of a wider audience and will again be represented this year at Midpex and Swinpex and it is hoped that our stand will be a meeting place for our members and, hopefully, a recruitment centre as well!

During our financial years of 2007 and 2008 we have not published any further books or brochures and of course our revenues have been affected by this. Our Point of Sales Organiser, Peter Maybury is to be thanked for his efforts in maintaining and developing sales of brochures, books and back numbers of our Journal.

On the other hand our auction and packet Secretaries have

received more new material, some of it kindly donated to the Society, and these activities have resulted in an improved surplus over last year. It would be wrong to leave this subject without a word of thanks to Mick Bister, John Hammonds, Bob Wood and John West for the immense effort and amount of time they have given to these activities, without which a major interest area for our members would not exist.

As I have said in previous reports, they do need help and support and new volunteers are called for, as it is not in their intentions to continue forever.

Our Journal goes from strength to strength and we are indebted to our Editor, Maurice Tyler for the continued improvement in our Journal. The greater use of colour and the superb presentation have been aided by the use of new software programs that place us at the cutting edge of technology.

Looking to the year ahead, I have received no proposals to change the overall direction we take. The Society does belong to the members and their views and reactions are valuable to us as the sole aim of your Committee is to try to give all members the kind of Society that they want. Anyone who has new or different ideas or who would like to play an active role in helping to run the Society is encouraged to contact any of the Officers.

I would like to thank all of the Officers and Committee Members for their different contributions in 2008 and will be counting on them again in 2009.

Finally, and on behalf of the Society, I am immensely proud to announce that two of our members George Barker and John Sussex have been invited to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists. This is a great honour and richly deserved. Our congratulations go to John and, particularly, George who, over a period of many years, has done so much for our Society."

(5) Treasurer's Report - Chris Hitchen

"The year finished with a modest surplus of £xxx.xx On the income side both the packet and auction were very successful producing a substantial amount of income. Sales of our publications continued strongly and all the income from that source is now surplus. Subscriptions maintained the levels of previous years.

Unfortunately our costs increase inexorably. Whilst controlled as tightly as possible postage goes up annually by far more than the rate of inflation and this is a major part of our expenditure under the heading postage and expenses. The increase in the figure for Journals is slightly higher than would otherwise be the case because the Society bought some software to help our editor further improve the already high quality of the Journal. Packet losses have led to a substantial rise in the cost of insurance.

I would recommend keeping the subscription at the present level for 2010 but an increase in 2011 or 2012 is probably inevitable. The society has good reserves but these should not be used for current expenditure."

The Accounts were accepted *nem con* after a proposal by Mick Bister seconded by John Hammonds.

FRANCE & COLONIES PHILATELIC SOCIETY
BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2008

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash at bank
 Cash at building society
 Sundry debtors

DEDUCT CURRENT LIABILITIES

Sundry creditors
 Subscriptions in advance

TOTAL ASSETS

Represented by

MEMBERS FUNDS

Uncommitted funds at 1.1.2007
 Year surplus

2007

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2008Expenditure

2008

2007

Meetings
 Journal 4 issues
 Postage and expenses
 Insurance
 Library
 Year surplus

Income

2008

2007

Auction
 Exchange packet
 Interest
 Sale of publications
 Library
 Subscriptions

(6) Auction Secretary's Report - Mick Bister

"At the end of a rather disappointing season for the auction I closed last year's report with the following words: 'I am optimistic that things will get better and I look forward to giving you a positive report next year.'

As a man who keeps his word, I am delighted to say that I can indeed present a more positive report.

There were only two auctions in 2008 - a room auction in May and a postal auction in November. 21 members sent in material for the May auction in which 80 members bid (20.5% of the membership) and 56% of the material was sold. 25 members contributed lots to the November auction with 72 members bidding (18.5% of the membership) and 45% of the material finding a home. Membership participation is generally improving but we are still a long way off from how it was in the 1990s.

With there being just the two sales, a further downturn in profits might have been anticipated, but any loss was more than compensated for by two sources of fine mate-

rial. Member Ray Whitelock of Leeds bequeathed his entire France & French Colonies collections to the Society requesting that the entire proceeds should come to us. He wrote to me initially in 2002 to inform me of his intentions an extract of which I quote now:

'Because I have no close relatives at all left now a large part of what I leave will go to various charities. However, when I came to consider my stamp collection I was most reluctant for that to go to some charity which would know nothing of the stamps. The obvious answer therefore seemed to be for it to go to the F&CPS which has given me so much pleasure'.

When Ray died last year I took delivery of the collections from Stephen Holder to whom I am very grateful for the assistance in creating manageable lots, the first of which were included in the November sale. Further lots will likewise appear in this year's November sale and unsolds at the Charlecote bourse thus providing a steady income for several seasons to come..

The second source of excellent material has been the estate of the late John Levett. This has provided the Society with the sort of material not often offered in our auctions as reflected in the large number of bids received and the high percentage of lots sold. I am grateful to George Barker for his most helpful lotting of John's material.

Although we were only able to run two auctions in 2008 the bookstall at the Society's annual weekend at Charlecote made up for any potential reduction of income. On this occasion, we relaunched the stamp bourse which was comprised mostly of unsolds from earlier auctions offered at reduced prices. With a turnover of £xxxx a profit of £xxx was raised. However, the 2008 profit will pale into insignificance when I announce the profit of the 2009 Bookstall and Bourse in next year's report.

The quality and variety of material is certainly improving and I have had difficulty in limiting my selection of illustrations for the Journal. Maurice has proposed that the illustration of lots be extended to our website which indeed may have happened by the time this report is read.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to all those who gave me assistance last year. I am as ever indebted to Alan Wood for taking us so expeditiously through the room auction and to the ladies, Annette Tyler, Jean Hammonds and my wife Marian, for giving up so much time and effort to manage the stalls at Charlecote. My greatest thanks though go to the vendors whose material is the lifeblood of the auction; their contributions are invaluable and the success of the auction would not be achieved without them.

FRANCE & COLONIES PHILATELIC SOCIETY					
AUCTION ACCOUNT for the year ending 31 DECEMBER 2008					
INCOME			EXPENDITURE		
2007		2008	2007		2008
SALE OF LOTS			PAYMENTS TO VENDORS		
(including reimbursed Postage & Packing)					
	February			February	
	May			May	
	August			August	
_____	November	_____	_____	November	_____
BOOKSTALL & BOURSE			BOOKSTALL		
			PRINTING		
			February		
			May		
			August		
			_____	November	_____
			POSTAGE		
			February		
			May		
			August		
			_____	November	_____
			OTHER OUTGOINGS		
			Sec. Expenses		
			Profit to Society		
			Credit c/f to 2009		
_____	Bank Interest	_____	_____	Float c/f to 2009	_____
_____	Credit to Buyers	_____	_____		_____
_____	Float b/f from 2007	_____	_____		_____

RECONCILIATION OF CASH POSITION AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2008

Balance in HSBC Current Account
 Unpresented cheques from buyers
 Unpresented cheques from vendors
 Less profit paid to Society
 Amount carried forward to 2009 (float and 1 member's credit)

*E&OE**M L Bister**1 January 2009***(7) Report of Packet Secretary (France) – Bob Wood**

“During 2008 20 members offered material for sale, and the number of members receiving packets remained constant at 110. Once again the number of booklets received has increased (from 175 in 2007 to 232 in 2008), and there has been a corresponding increase in the number returned to vendors, usually after completing three or more circuits (from 127 in 2007 to 172 in 2008). Unfortunately this number includes 24 booklets contained in two packets which were lost in transit during the year. Most of their contents were covered by insurance, so the vendors were usually fully compensated, but some valuable material was lost, and the Society will have to bear an increased insurance premium in the coming year. It is small comfort to learn that our experience has been shared by other philatelic societies.

Although members are encouraged to alert recipients to the imminent arrival of a packet, it is not always possible

to guarantee that someone will be present to receive it. So in an attempt to reduce the risks, the size of packets will in future be smaller, so that when posted they can be delivered through a standard letter-box. This will involve a reduction in the range of choice provided in each packet, but it is hoped to compensate for this by increasing the number of packets in circulation at any one time. Already (March 2009) this number has been increased from 10 to 14, so that in future members should expect to receive packets at intervals of between four and six weeks.

As always, the successful operation of packet circulation depends on careful observance of the agreed guidelines. Most members are scrupulous in this, and their tolerance where human error intervenes is much appreciated. Above all, the Society is grateful to those members who provide material for sale: the formal accounts show how far their generosity has been rewarded.”

ACCOUNTS FOR ‘FRANCE’ PACKET 1 JANUARY - 31 DECEMBER 2008

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
2007			2007
	In hand 1 January: cash at bank		
	Current a/c		2007 surplus paid to Treasurer
_____	Deposit a/c	_____	

	Receipts from members	Expenses:	
	Cheques paid to bank	Stationery & printing	
_____	Stamps and cash	Postage	_____

		less value of	
		stamps and cash received	_____
		Payments to vendors	_____
		Cash at bank:	
		Current a/c	
		Deposit a/c:	_____
_____	Bank interest		_____

comprising

(a) 2007 surplus due to Treasurer(b) completed booklets

commission on sales

insurance

return postage refunded

balance paid to vendors

(c) booklets still circulatingCash at bank comprises

receipts for booklets still circulating

surplus due to Treasurer

(8) Report of Packet Secretary (Colonies) - John West *(summarised by Peter Kelly)*

John West reports a much improved year that has produced a significantly higher surplus of £xxxx. This was achieved by a major effort to increase the number of packets in circulation with the result that each member received no less than 16 packets during the year. This excellent result was achieved despite various problems including water damage, loss of a stamp, and unsigned spaces. To put this in context 230 new books were received with payments to members totalling £xxxx

John has asked for his thanks to be expressed to those who have taken the time to acknowledge the work involved in running this important section of the Society's activities.

Running a successful packet smoothly requires the co-operation and support of all those involved and the Committee is grateful to John West and Bob Wood for their substantial contribution.

France and Colonies Colonial Packet accounts 1 January to 31 December 2008

Income

Balance b/f from 31 Dec 2007

Receipts from members

2008

Commission on sales

Insurance recovered

Postages recovered

Balance due to vendors _____

Total receipts 2008

Bank interest _____

Expenditure

Payments to vendors

Expenses

Expenses 2008 not paid out at 31 Dec 2008

Surplus 2007 paid to treasurer

Creditors:

Money received for booklets
not brought to account

Retained interest

Surplus 2008 paid to treasurer _____

(9) Editor's Report - Maurice Tyler

"I have continued to receive a sufficient number of articles from members (and occasionally others) to maintain the traditional size of the Journal – and, I hope, its quality. During 2008 the Journal was as usual produced four times, with a total of 156 pages (last year we had the same number, and the previous year 152 pages). However, the number of pages in full colour has risen to 98, almost twice as many as last year and nearly 4 times as many as in 2006. The number of words has also risen, from 72,800 in 2006 and 71,500 in 2007 to 76,400 in 2008. Despite all that the total cost of producing the Journal has hardly risen at all – by about £xxx if we take into account necessary expenses.

In March last year your committee agreed to purchase some new software at a cost of over £xxx that will be gradually recovered from expenses over a period of 5 years. Although it has taken time to learn how to use it effectively, it has proved extremely useful in giving me much more flexibility in my task as editor, and it also allows for a better liaison with our printers that will facilitate shorter runs of publications at a very economic price. I have used this software

in the production of the last 3 Journals in 2008 and it will be available for any future publications by the Society. It is partly the reason for the increase in colour without too much of an increase in price. I hope members approve.

As far as the website is concerned, I am still hoping to find an expert to take over the task of modernising it and keeping it up to date. In the meantime I will do what I can."

(10) Librarian's Report - George Barker

"The year was quieter than last year, with only 31 loans (2007: 38) and photocopies 52 (137). Conversely, the flow of additional material into the Library continued steadily, boosted additionally by a number of items from the library of the late John Levett. The amount of time that had been (and continues to be) spent on John's residual philatelic estate, coupled with my own busy life both here and in France, has meant that I have yet to complete the promised new Library List. However, John's material seems to have been quite popular with members, and so the individual purchasers have profited, as have the Society's funds!"

(11) Magazine Circuit Organiser's Report - David Pashby**FRANCE & COLONIES - MAGAZINES: Accounts for year ending 31st March 2009****ASSETS AND RECEIPTS** **2009** **2008**

Carried from previous year

Subs @ £10

Subs @ £5 @ £5 in 2008)

Interest on deposit account for year

TOTAL**EXPENDITURE**Sub to *Timbres* (2 copies) Feb 2009 :Sub to *l'Écho* (2 copies) Mar 20089:

Postages & incidental expenses

TOTAL**ASSETS AND RECEIPTS****less EXPENDITURE**(Note: circuit organizer has claimed £ for *Écho*, the balance remains in the Deposit Account)**DEBIT to carry to following year****- (profit)**

Current Account (by telephone)

Deposit Account (statement Nov 08)

(12) Sales Organiser's Report - Peter Maybury**Publications Report - Year to 31 December 2008****Volume Sales**

	Members	Non-Members	Wholesale	Promotional	Total
Rates Book -	4	16	-	-	20
Fakes & Forgeries -	3	13	6	1	23
Brochures & Journals -	59	3	-	-	62

Non-Member Geographical Sales

	U.K.	Europe	Rest of World	
Rates Book -	-	14	1	15
Fakes & Forgeries -	1	11	1	13
Brochures & Journals -	-	2	1	3

The financial benefit to the Society is presented in the Treasurer's report – Income and Expenditure Account.

(13) Election of Officers and Committee

It was proposed by Ashley Lawrence, seconded by John Hammonds, that the Officers and Committee members listed in the Agenda should be elected *en bloc*, and this was passed unanimously:

President:	Mr M L Bister
Vice-President:	Mr J C West
General Secretary:	Mr P R A Kelly
Membership Secretary:	Dr R G Gethin
Treasurer:	Mr C J Hitchen
Librarian:	Mr G E Barker
Editor:	Mr M S Tyler
Auction Secretary:	Mr M L Bister
Packet Secretary (France):	Mr R G E Wood
Packet Secretary (Colonies):	Mr J C West

Committee Members:

Mr L H Barnes
Mr H J Clifton
Mr S R Ellis
Mr A J Lawrence
Mr J Parmenter
Mr C W Spong
Prof W I Stevenson
Mr P S Stockton

For information: Group Convenors are Mr L H Barnes (London), Mr C W Spong (Southern), Mr J P Maybury (Northern), Mr P R A Kelly & Mr A J Wood (Wessex), and Mrs M Pavey (Scottish).

(14) Any Other Business

It was announced that the 2008 Literature Award had been been awarded to **Bill Mitchell**.

PRAK

Wessex Group Meeting of 4 July 2009

Gavin Fryer: Back of the Book Tariffs, Wrappers, Newspapers and All Sorts of Interesting Things

Members' Displays

Our invited display was given by Gavin Fryer whose title was 'Back of the book tariffs, wrappers, newspapers and all sorts of interesting things'. This constituted a quite amazing collection of reduced price material covering a wide range of applications.

Low value frankings are often hard to find because, unlike high value registered and insured items, they were generally thrown away. We were shown printed paper and wrapper rates including insufficiently paid mail and problems concerning weight differences — an extraordinary variety of the uses of printed matter, origins and destinations.

Gavin also explained the history and postal development of prices current and the complications of paper taxes in the early days. '*Papiers d'affaires*' were also shown with examples of heavy weights and international use. Book post, including registered, and samples followed with early European examples dating back to the 1780s. Decorative cards and advertising items were shown and also 'annotations', the extra payment for manuscript additions to printed matter. We all agreed that this was one of the finest displays given to the Group.

This was followed by members' displays:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| John Yeomans – | Reduced price items from the colonies including French India and Congo |
| Bob Paterson – | Commercially used material in the 1930s and 1940s |
| Edwin Rideout – | Spanish pre-stamp mail entering France |
| Andrew Watton – | Corsican ephemera, fliers for transport and tourism |
| Bryan Wood – | Lozenge 3154 used in Quito, Ecuador |
| Jeremy Martin – | French airmails to West Africa |
| Alan Wood – | French telephones |
| John Lea (visitor) – | A French precancel on cover |
| George Nash – | A soldier's story: a WWII archive of a soldier serving in France |
| Peter Kelly – | The green issues of <i>Type Sage</i> : 1876 to 1.5.1878 |

The following members also attended: Mrs I Swinburn, Messrs A Lawrence and P Lawrence.

Our next meeting will be held on 17 October at the Scout Hall when our invited display will be given by Andrew Watton on 'The postal history of Corsica'.

PRAK/AJW

Northern Group Meeting of 11 July 2009

Celebrating Bastille Day, at Heaton Royds, Bradford

Those attending: G E Barker, M L Bister, R Clapham, S R Ellis, A Goude, C J Hitchen, C S Holder, J P Maybury, J W Morton, P Rooke, A Shepherd, P S Stockton; and guests C Pease and R Shiers.

Apologies were tendered by: J Cowell, R High, M Meadowcroft, J Mercer, M Pavey, D Richardson, J Smith, M Tyler, P Watkins, A Wishart, .

Following coffee and biscuits in the garden, Stephen Holder opened the proceedings by welcoming everyone, and noting that his sacrifices to RA had once again been favourably received, with not a rain-cloud in sight.

The order of displays was as follows:-

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| George Barker – | Pre-stamp postal history |
| Peter Maybury – | <i>Bateaux à vapeur</i> , the service east of Algiers |
| Peter Rooke – | Piedmont <i>Départements conquis</i> |

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Chris Hitchen – | Paris and the 1849 1st issues |
| Steve Ellis – | 1836 Anglo-French postal convention |
| John Morton – | Cross-Channel mail 1592-1835 |

1.00pm break for a very French lunch in the garden.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Stephen Holder – | French POs in Syria |
| Ronnie Shiers – | Early aviators |
| Mick Bister – | <i>Marianne de Cheffer</i> |
| Alan Goude – | A colonial <i>pot pourri</i> |
| Tony Shepherd – | Guadeloupe & Martinique in WWII |
| George Barker – | The <i>Manoir Clos Lucé</i> 1F definitive |
| Peter Stockton – | French Morocco military mail. |
| Stephen Holder – | French India |

The meeting concluded with a resounding thank you to Stephen and Judith for their hospitality, and to the ladies for their help with the catering. Following afternoon tea in the garden, we all headed for home.

JPM

Wessex Group Meeting of 13 June 2009 held at SWINPEX, Swindon

The meeting was attended by 4 members only! The following displayed:

Alan Wood – 1949-1949 Centenary Exhibition
W H Stephens – 1926 25c and 30c sheets with advertising tabs and 1698-1833 early St Malo, *deboursés*, and an invitation to a duel
John Mayne – Local posts of Morocco and a pc of a

POW captured in Togo and taken to Dahomey

Jeremy Martin also attended.

A decision was later taken by the convenors not to have meetings at Swinpex in future as we were unable to compete against the heady lure of the dealers boxes!

PRAK/AJW

Visit to the French National Championship at Tarbes on 12-14 June 2009

The show was a great success although there were fewer people there than one would normally expect at a National because of the location. It was held in the excellent *Parc Expositions* with distant views of the snow capped mountains of the Pyrenees.

Two of our members entered:

Michèle Chauvet was awarded Gold and voted *Champion de France* in the *Philatélie Traditionnelle* class with a stunning display entitled '*Les Aigles - Premiers timbres-poste de*

l'Empire Français'.

Ralph Barracano entered two collections in the *Histoire Postale Division A* class and was awarded a Large Silver for his '*Histoire Postale des Pyrénées Orientales*' and a *Grand Vermeil* with congratulations from the Jury for his '*Histoire Postale du Roussillon 1519-1848*'.

Visitors included UK members Chris Hitchen, Steve Ellis and Peter Kelly.

PRAK

SHORTER ITEMS

Continued from page 92

WWII Airmail Rates from French Equatorial Africa

Non-member Michael Barden posed a query about the applicable rates for an August 1942 letter from AEF to France (in Journals 250 p.142 and 251 p.33). I contacted him directly, but our members may be interested in the details.

In August 1942, when the letter was sent, the domestic basic (or surface) rate was 1F (to 20g). But we do not know what the airmail surtax to France was at the time – simply because there was no direct airmail service between Free France AEF and Vichy France, and so no surtaxes to France were published. Consequently, understanding the 12F paid for airmail depends on what 'leg' of the total flight the sender was paying for – and there are no markings to indicate what the sender expected in this regard. Nonetheless, as already indicated, the letter apparently went from Port Gentil (Gabon) to Brazzaville (French Congo), then to Lagos (perhaps by Léopoldville), to the UK, back to Lisbon, and from there into France (apparently by DLH at least part of the way, given the Madrid transit stamp).

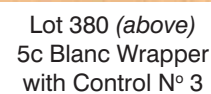
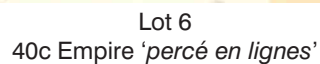
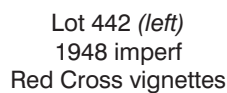
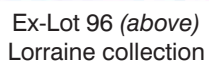
Assuming that much of this was by BOAC (from Lagos to the UK and back to Lisbon, probably), it may be that a 6F/5g airmail surtax from West Africa to the UK (or even for part of that journey) applied. The 12F surtax does "fit"

with the evidence of several other covers that there was a 6F/5g surtax at the time to the UK (or perhaps to any stop along the BOAC route from West Africa). In that case, the 12F represents double this 6F/5g surtax (letter of 5-10 grams). I am fairly confident that this is the basis for the 13F paid. I hasten to add that this 6F surtax is based on strong cover evidence rather than on published sources, and it is not clear whether this covered air transportation all the way to the UK or just within West Africa, from which the letter would go by surface to the UK.

One may compare the surtax to the UK from Cameroun; a number of covers from both places appear to have gone to the UK without going twice across the Atlantic, using this surtax. See "Airmail Routes and Rates from Cameroun to the UK during World War II" (Journal 250 of December 2008, pp. 145-51) by Martin P Bratzel, Jr and me. I personally incline to the view that the 6F surtax was meant to carry the mail all the way (when space was available) by BOAC to the UK, but one cannot be certain. In this case the surtax would appear at least to have paid for airmail to Lisbon, and the wartime situation would have caused the letter to travel the extra distance to London (for censorship, where the OAT handstamp was applied) and back.

Bob Picirilli

Continued from page 132



Lot 53 (*left*)
1890 Diégo-Suarez
(genuine and
Poirier forgeries)